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WESTMINSTER SERMONS

WESTMINSTER SERMONS

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "PREACHING TO THE TIMES."

NEW YORK

A. C. ARMSTRONG & SON

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PREFACE

THE sermons here published were all, with a single exception, preached at Westminster, either in the Abbey or in S. Margaret's, between the years 1904 and 1910. The solitary exception is the sermon, "A Law of Liberty," which was preached in S. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, on the invitation of the minister, Dr. McGregor. To the sermons on "Anglicanism" I have added three papers, which treat of some aspects of the urgent question of "Reunion," which could not easily be dealt with in the pulpit.

Such unity as this volume possesses consists in the conception of Christianity which it exhibits from various points of view, and which, as I am persuaded, is properly characteristic of the National Church of England, though, in recent years, obscured and generally disowned. On the recovery and re-establishment of the older Anglicanism much depends. The question of Reunion, which has filled so large a place in religious discussions during recent years, would at once enter a more hopeful phase, if the prohibitive condition now insisted upon by Anglican authorities (in spite of Anglican history which might seem to disallow it as involving self-stultification) were abandoned; and negotiations with the other Reformed Churches were undertaken on a basis of recognized

Christian Fraternity. Such recognition, however, involves "Intercommunion," and in the present state of feeling among the Anglican clergy necessitates a large sacrifice of prejudices and preferences. Yet I do not despair of persuading my brethren to make that sacrifice, if once they will consent to consider with open minds the situation in which we stand as Christians, and the special responsibilities which rest on us as English Churchmen.

H. H. H.

Westminster Abbey,
February 16, 1910.

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I

ANGLICANISM

I

CHRISTIAN HISTORY A TONIC FOR FAILING HEARTS[1]

GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH,
A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE,
THEREFORE WILL WE NOT FEAR, THOUGH THE EARTH DO CHANGE,
AND THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS BE MOVED IN THE HEART OF THE SEAS;
THOUGH THE WATERS THEREOF ROAR AND BE TROUBLED,
THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS SHAKE WITH THE SWELLING THEREOF,
. . . . . .
THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;
THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE.

PSALM xlvi. 1—3, 11.

SUCH words as these, perhaps, best serve to utter what is in our minds to-day, when we send our thoughts far backwards over thirteen centuries, and link together solemn thanksgiving with renewed endeavours to sustain and extend the work of Christ in this great capital. On the whole I find history a wonderful tonic for failing courage, and, perhaps, this commemoration of the re-founding of the bishopric of London has fallen very suitably for our needs in a time of manifold anxiety. To speak only of what will be universally allowed, I may name two subjects which have loomed large in

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 5th Sunday after Easter, May 8, 1904, on the occasion of the 1,300th anniversary of the re-founding of the Bishopric of London.

public discussion during the last few months, and which unquestionably have caused deep and widespread misgiving among sincere and thoughtful Christian folk. The elaborate inquiry into church attendance throughout London, the results of which have been admirably summarized in the large and remarkably cheap volume edited by Mr. MUDIE SMITH and entitled "The Religious Life of London," deepened the depression caused by Mr. CHARLES BOOTH's elaborate investigations. Comparison with an earlier enumeration appears to show that as the population of London increases, so the number of worshippers in the Christian churches steadily diminishes, and that this diminution is mainly in the congregations of the Church of England. That is a subject for serious heart-searching among us all, and we all know how heavily it rests on the hearts and consciences of the best and devoutest members of all branches of Christ's Church. Then, alongside of this melancholy process of alienation, there has been grave distress of mind within the Christian camp itself, and this subject also, as we reflect on our present situation, depresses us wonderfully. Therefore I shall carry you all with me when I say that we come to our commemoration to-day in a time of trouble and unrest, and in a temper of natural, nay, inevitable, dejection.

Thirteen centuries is a long period as historians reckon; it is two-thirds of the Christian era, and yet it does not embrace by at least three centuries the life of the Church of Christ within this island. We commemorate the re-founding of a bishopric, which had become extinct a century and a half previously. The

circumstances of that restoration of Christianity in London as we may read them in the record of the Venerable BEDE, are full of interest. We are carried at once into the most terrible transition-time which the experience of the Christian Church has known. The earlier bishopric of London had formed part of the state system of the christianized Roman Empire. The bishop of London obeyed the summons of CONSTANTINE to the Council of Arles in 314, and enough of the history of the following century is preserved to make us certain that the bishops of London took their full part in the general life of the Imperial Church; and then the Roman Empire fell before the incessant pressure of the barbarous races on the frontiers, fell from within through a series of disasters and blunders which our historical students are still investigating. It requires rare gifts of insight and imagination to realize what the downfall of the Roman Empire meant to Christians.

"The failure of Roman civilization [writes one who was wont to measure his words, Dean CHURCH], its wreck and dissolution in the barbarian storms, was the most astonishing catastrophe the world had yet seen in its history: and those who beheld the empire breaking up, as blow after blow was struck more home, ceased to look forward to any future for society."[1]

The empire was Christian: the barbarians who destroyed it were pagan. Consider how grievous perplexities were stirred in Christian minds by that strange contradiction of their hopes and expectations. Apparently the faith of Christ could not hold its own against the powers of falsehood: the Church had been so closely bound up with the system of the empire that

[1] "Gifts of Civilization," p. 151.

when the empire perished the Church seemed to perish with it. Then in the most unlooked-for manner the temple of the Lord was rebuilt, and the long lines of episcopal succession which are still continued among us were started. Take the list of the bishops of London from MELLITUS, who received the see in 604, or, perhaps, more fairly, from ERKENWALD, who may be regarded as the true re-founder of the bishopric, to which he was consecrated by Archbishop THEODORE in 675, and read it thoughtfully. Consider what is implied in the transition from the Anglo-Saxon names, unfamiliar now for the most part, to the Norman names which have become literally household words throughout the English-speaking world. From Anglo-Saxon to Norman certifies a religious revolution of a far-reaching character. It is not in my mind to make any controversial suggestions. It does not seem to me that in the long conflict between the Churches of England and Rome anything really turns on the change to which I am now alluding. The early English Church was at one with the rest of western Christians in its veneration for the apostolic see, and I cannot myself discover any satisfactory evidence of that religious individualism which is sometimes claimed for it; but all will admit that the feudalised Church of the mediæval epoch, the Church of HILDEBRAND, INNOCENT III., and BONIFACE VIII., of the great monastic orders, of the mendicants, of the schoolmen, the Church which survives among us in its superb architecture, and even in despite of ourselves, casts the spell of its romantic charm on our too prosaic and utility-haunted minds, was with reference to what preceded it as much a new thing as had been

that older Church of the English, which grew from fresh beginnings on the ruin-covered sites from which the yet older Church of the imperial province had perished.

The theory of the episcopate was silently changed as the Church became organized on feudal lines. There was grandeur in that mediæval conception of Christendom, the kingdom of God visibly established on the earth, the nations entering into it and owning glad obedience to its divine authority; but with respect to that conception also Time, the one great teacher whose function never is outgrown, has brought correction and disillusionment. Pass down your list of bishops for five hundred years, and you come to a pair of names, between which lies the greatest of all the transitions, which, in the course of the thirteen centuries which we review to-day, the Church of England, and therein the Church of London, has had to experience—EDMUND BONNER, 1540: NICHOLAS RIDLEY, 1550. Could we find, in the whole range of our ecclesiastical annals, two names at once more familiar, and more diversely suggestive? The contrast may serve to indicate the violence of the religious change which had come upon England. I do not pass any judgment on the traditional reputations of these two bishops of London. It may well be the case that the virulence of party resentment has unduly blackened the name of BONNER, and perhaps the popular veneration for the name of RIDLEY has its strongest roots not in the past but in the present. Yet it is pleasant to remember that the Protestant bishop of London, who had previously been one of the prebendaries appointed by Henry VIII. to

replace the monks in Westminster Abbey, is remembered as having exerted himself to resist the rapacity of EDWARD VI.'s courtiers—rapacity, you will remember, that nearly swept away S. Margaret's altogether.

"Early in 1553 he appealed to the young king, while preaching before him at Westminster, to make better provision for the destitute London poor. After the sermon EDWARD VI. invited RIDLEY to give him more detailed advice. At the bishop's suggestion royal letters were sent inviting the co-operation of the lord mayor and corporation, and in the result Christ's Hospital, S. Thomas's Hospital, and Bethlehem Hospital were founded jointly by the king and corporation to alleviate the poverty of London."[1]

BONNER and RIDLEY—the two names, standing in our national record, are symbolic of two conceptions of Christianity, two ideals of the Church, two theories of the episcopal office. Two conceptions so vitally opposed as then seemed manifest that BONNER, no doubt sincerely, thought himself bound in conscience to burn RIDLEY; and RIDLEY, with equal sincerity, was equally clear that he must for conscience' sake imprison BONNER! Yet there they stand demurely harmonious in our list of bishops, like two tall columns, marking a stricken field of the long past, which still attest the conflict amid scenes of peace. In the transition from mediævalism to our modern world how much anguish of mind, collapse of faith, downfall of character came upon the Church! There was hopeless confusion, intolerable scandal: and yet the failure of Christianity, which to a disinterested onlooker might have seemed imminent, did not come; and we can see now, as we calmly review the course of events, that we have indeed reason to

[1] "Dictionary of National Biography," Vol. XLVIII., p. 287.

thank God that the great change came to us English-folk in suchwise that BONNER and RIDLEY can stand together on the roll of the bishops of London. There is one more break in the history to which I will call your attention. It fills a memorable chapter in the annals of this famous Church. In 1643, S. Margaret's was the scene of a remarkable event. The House of Commons and the Assembly of Divines came here and with the utmost solemnity subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant, by which they pledged themselves to "endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy (that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy) and so forth." Six years later the King was beheaded at Whitehall, and the bishop of London was deprived of his see. WILLIAM JUXON was then bishop: he had stood by CHARLES I. at the scaffold, and was destined to place the crown on the head of CHARLES II. What a transition is pinched between those events! The whole future of the English people may fairly be said to have been at stake in that tremendous conflict, which settled finally that England was to be constitutional in polity and Protestant in religion. And, as we review the history calmly, how clear it is to us that we have indeed good cause to thank God that, in His great mercy to our nation, the continuity of national and ecclesiastical development was secured even through the violent commotions of that age! WILLIAM JUXON's name covers a gap in Anglican history and conceals what was in truth a religious revolution. The Restoration settlement in

Church and State proceeded on the assumption that all that had happened during the years of interregnum might be ignored; and no doubt during the reign of CHARLES II., in the madness of that vehement reaction against Puritan ideals and Puritan methods, which, for a space, swept all before it, it seemed evident that that assumption was sufficiently secure; but, as we review the whole epoch from the standpoint of our time, we can see that the victory lay finally with that cause of ordered liberty which, however unworthily, had been championed by the great Parliament which fought and crushed both monarchy and Church, and which (as we may be allowed to remember) used S. Margaret's habitually almost as its private chapel.

I have contented myself with pointing you to a few outstanding crises, in which the religion of Christ among us passed through great transitions, and received altered aspects. If you pursue the line of thought on which our discourse has proceeded, and go behind the mere external system of English Christianity, which the long line of bishops of London so strikingly illustrates, to the beliefs of men, and the habits which those beliefs inspired, you will, I am sure, be even more impressed by the indestructible vitality of the religion of Christ. What changes have passed over Christian thought during these thirteen centuries! How the standard of essential truth, which has been insisted upon, has varied from time to time! How differently we regard almost every part of the Christian system! How many types and measures of theology are represented by the successive bishops of London! Yet there is a deep, continuous agreement, and the long unbroken chain is eloquent of

a spiritual identity which is inviolate and inviolable. Some of you will know the noble sermon preached in Westminster Abbey in 1869 on "The Place of the Episcopate in Christian History." The preacher—it was Dean CHURCH—dwelt on the value of the historic episcopate in keeping alive in our minds, amid so many dividing influences, the sense of unity.

"That which has kept on from age to age this sense of the oneness of the continuous Christian body is, I cannot doubt, as far as anything outward has done it, the unfailing presence of the episcopate. There were other influences, doubtless, out of sight and deeper; but this one was immediate and direct. If, in spite of all our differences, we all of us feel ourselves one with the first ages, one with the Church universal of all times, instead of an entirely different body growing out of it and coming into its place, it is along these threads and networks of the episcopate that the secret agencies have travelled, which have kept alive the sentiment of identity, amid so much that seemed to contradict and defy it."[1]

It seems to me that it is not necessary to be an ardent episcopalian to admit the truth of all this. Granted that in the last three centuries God has willed to work through churches which are otherwise organised than our own, it yet remains the fact that the Christianity professed by those churches traces its historic connection with the Church of the Apostles through that older society which already for a thousand years in London had been ruled by bishops. Nonconformists, as well as Anglicans, can, without suspicion of disloyalty to their own principles, join in our thanksgiving to-day. As it would be an unworthy use of this commemoration to build on it an advocacy of denominational claims, so also would it be an unworthy plea to justify any Christian's abstention from it, that he,

[1] "Pascal and other Sermons," p. 104.

forsooth, was not episcopalian. We Churchmen and Nonconformists are frankly above the level of current controversies to-day, when, as fellow-Christians, we thank God for the unbroken continuity of Christian worship in London through thirteen centuries; and, if we have been perplexed and troubled by the many tokens of transition amidst which we live, surely, as we recall that long and various history, which the line of 106 bishops of London effectively represents, we can take heart again, and be sure that, come what may, Christianity has nothing to fear. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will we not fear, though the earth do change, and though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

From the retrospect with its solemn warnings and large consolations we turn to face the situation which now confronts us in London. We are asked by the living representative of that long line of bishops which links the seventh century with the twentieth to strengthen, by liberal gifts, the work which he directs and carries on. May I say that the appeal comes with distinctive fitness and exceptional force from our present bishop. In reviewing the long series of prelates who for thirteen centuries have borne rule in London, it was impossible to avoid estimates and comparisons of the men themselves. What a richly varied company it is! Statesmen, scholars, organizers, saints, are in the list. Some were popular, and some successful; some were

neither popular nor successful; and some were both. Perhaps the most personally attractive of them all was called to endure the severest strokes of adverse fortune. I have already named him—WILLIAM JUXON, who held this see for 27 years, from 1633 to 1660, and for most part of the time was unable to exercise his functions. Might we not apply to his latest successor the description of Bishop JUXON himself, which a younger contemporary has left on record;

"That he was 'the delight of the English nation, whose reverence was the only thing all factions agreed in, by allowing that honour to the sweetness of his manners that some denied to the sacredness of his function, being by love, what another is in pretence, the universal bishop.'"[1]

You will not resent this historical parallel, nor will you dispute the special cogency of an appeal for help from one who adds to his official authority the weight of ardent and arduous pastoral labours. I think we ought to contribute liberally to the Bishop of London's Fund, even although it is the case, and perhaps it must be the case, that we are more than commonly perplexed on the whole subject of religious methods. Experience suggests that we ought not to be too much depressed by apparent failure. Irreligion sweeps through the national life in sudden waves which seem to be quite irresistible, but those waves spend themselves, and in due course it is seen that the landscape of society preserves its familiar features. We must not attach too great importance to the irreligious tendency which is at present powerful among us, the least mischievous effects

[1] "Dictionary of National Biography," Vol. XXX., p. 234. The quotation is from Lloyd's "Memoirs of those that suffered."

of which are perhaps those which most easily arrest our attention: desecration of the Lord's day, absenteeism from divine service, secularizing of the divine service itself. These signs of a failing convention may be now, what they certainly have been in the past, the tokens of religious transition, but, being such, they are as truly auguries of renewed vitality as occasions for searching of heart. "The things that are not seen are eternal" and they can best measure the forces of the present who look beyond the present; who by the virtue of that far-ranging vision are strong to endure obvious failure because they have assurance of what is not obvious; who live, as was said of a hero of faith in the olden time, "as seeing Him who is invisible." The Church of Christ has been, through ill fortune and good, for thirteen centuries, the divine instrument for cleansing and lifting the life of the English people; in spite of faults which we must acknowledge, and of divisions which we cannot but deplore, the Church of Christ is still the best thing we English people have received from the past. Woe to us, if in despair, or in disgust, or, worst of all, in mere idle dereliction of a duty, which in our hearts we own, we do not hand on in vigour and efficiency to the coming time that great gift which we have received. By a happy inspiration, Mr. MUDIE SMITH has prefixed to his melancholy record of Church attendance, some words of EMERSON, which may well point the moral of such a sermon as this:—

"What greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate or the market. Literature becomes frivolous.

Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honour. Society lives to trifles; and when men die we do not mention them."

The American philosopher speaks profound truth; but, remember, there can be no worship where there is no living faith in a God, Whom men confess to be worthy of worship, a God, of Whom even now amid the novel and dismaying circumstances of these latest times, men may speak in the language of ancient conviction. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear . . . The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

II

THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE AND INTER-COMMUNION[1]

1. The Church of England at the Reformation retained the episcopal government. It has been, and will always continue to be, matter of controversy whether that episcopate, which may be said to have come into being when Matthew Parker was consecrated, really satisfied the conditions of spiritual validity required by what are generally called "Catholic principles." That the consecration was performed by men in episcopal orders is now admitted by all candid controversialists: that the Edwardine form used can be justified by earlier Christian precedents is equally certain: that the episcopate thus created and transmitted has been accepted within the Church of England, and confirmed by Acts of Parliament, may go without saying. If, however, another series of considerations, unquestionably cogent, be admitted, the validity of the English episcopate falls to the ground. Do Catholic principles really admit of spiritual validity attaching to the proceedings of a hierarchy in manifest schism? Can some early precedents really justify the deliberate repudiation of the only authorized and long established

[1] Paper read to "The Christian Conference" at Zion College on Monday, January 17, 1910.

forms of consecration? Is it a safe assumption that nothing turns on the avowed intentions of the consecrators?

"I venture to say," said the Bishop of Durham at Islington, "that if in order to ministerial grace a sacerdotal commission, in a sacrificial and mediatorial sense of the words, as distinct from a commission for pastorate and leadership, is necessary, the Pope was right in denying a valid ministry in our ministers."[1] His lordship adds that our formula concerning forgiving and retaining sins, though "connected by the tradition of ages with a proper *sacerdotium*, proves on reflection to have no essential connection with it."

It appears to me neither candid nor reasonable to deny that a very strong case against the validity of Anglican orders can be made out on what are called "Catholic principles." This aspect of the subject, however, has no interest for Protestants, who are under no necessity to question the validity of the Anglican episcopate: it is only mentioned in order to remind those Anglicans who are disposed to repudiate the non-episcopal ministries of the other Protestant Churches, that they are turning their backs on the only Christians in the world who have no doubt as to the validity of Anglican orders.

2. The phrase "the historic episcopate," borrowed from the resolutions of the Anglican Conference of 1888, is properly absurd as used to indicate the Anglican variety of episcopacy. What is that episcopate which alone is entitled to the description historic? Assuredly

[1] *The Record*, January 14, 1910.

no single variety of episcopacy has prevailed throughout Christian history. Out of the many episcopal types, which is entitled to the homage of modern Christians? Is it the presbyter bishop of the pastoral epistles and S. Clement of Rome? or the monarchical bishop of S. Ignatius and S. Cyprian? or the tribal bishop of the Celtic Church? or the feudal bishop of mediæval Europe? or the Erastian bishop of Tudor England? or the "tulchan bishop" of seventeenth-century Scotland? or the political bishop of the Hanoverians? or the "Apostolic" bishop of the Tractarians? or the episcopal presbyter of the Presbyterian "High" Churchmen? or the delegate bishop of modern Rome? or the superintendent bishop of the Lutherans and Episcopal Methodists? All are equally historic, and so are many other forms of ecclesiastical system. History is never a partisan, and the tradition which it delivers from the past to the present is too vast and various to serve any particular theory. To my thinking this phrase, "the historic episcopate," is misleading and unhelpful. It really means no more than the particular form of ecclesiastical government which modern Anglicans possess, and which many of them suppose to be of all the reformed ministries exclusively authorized by God.

3. There are two bodies of reformed Christians—the Moravians and the Swedish Lutherans—which claim to possess "the historic episcopate," transmitted from the pre-Reformation Church. Neither of them finds it necessary to repudiate fellowship with non-episcopal churches. This fact may suffice to show that there is nothing prohibitive of intercommunion involved in the

possession of "the historic episcopate." The difficulty arises only when a specific theory, the dogma of "apostolical succession," is associated with the episcopal system. Let me here call your attention to the excellent reply which the general synod of the Moravian Church has returned to the rather patronizing overtures of the last Pan-Anglican conference. It is published in the "Church Quarterly" for October, 1909. The third resolution runs thus :—

"That we hold that inter-communion with the Anglican Church must rest on the same mutual recognition and freedom to co-operate as now exists between us and several Churches, episcopal and other, in Europe and America; and, corporate union not being in question, we regard our position as that of an independent branch of the Church Catholic, 'an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church,' as described in the Act of Parliament, 22 Geo. II. cap. 120."

The Moravian Professor SCHWARZE, writing in the same journal, described thus the Moravian position :—

"Moravians, in their estimation of religious and ecclesiastical values for Christian unity, rate episcopacy as of secondary interest. Their standpoint is that the basis of union consists in the fundamental facts of Christianity. Episcopacy, in their view, may be very useful to the attainment of the laudable object, but it is not essential. Principles of religion and faith, they hold, commend themselves to all the seriously minded as proper ground for Christian union, and even Church union. The end held in view by both communions (Anglican and Moravian), viz., alliance that shall have substantiality, agreement that shall have vitality, is the same : the method of approach held by each to be feasible differs from the other."

The Moravians do not hold the dogma of apostolical succession : the Pan-Anglican conference seems to make that dogma its presupposition. In that dogma is a fatal obstacle to intercommunion.

4. Let us take a moderate statement of the dogma by one whose candour, learning, and good sense are

universally allowed, Dr. STRONG, the present Dean of Christ Church. In his "Manual of Theology," published in 1892, there is a chapter entitled "The Extension of the Incarnation in the Church and the Sacraments." Throughout this chapter the author appears to be labouring under the consciousness that his exclusive theory is properly inconsistent with his general conception of Christianity. He is driven to strange expedients to find some tolerable explanation of his rigorous doctrine. Throughout the discussion he identifies the visible Church of Christ with the episcopally-organised churches, and disallows as inadmissible the notion that non-episcopal ministries and sacraments administered by them, can be valid:—

"The Church, we say, is a permanent assurance by its very existence of the presence and activity of God in the world. And it is in this connexion that we come across the question of the validity of sacraments. . . . Quite broadly, then, the Church lays its *imprimatur* only upon sacraments performed in connexion with its own organization and usage. It claims to be the normal channel through which the grace of the new covenant is given to men; and in this capacity it defines certain methods for the bestowal of its benefits. Sacraments, then, if they are to be administered in connexion with the Church, must conform to the conditions laid down. Otherwise the Church guarantees nothing. Hence, in the case of the Eucharist as administered by societies which have broken off from the common tradition in organization, there is a deficiency in the conditions of validity demanded by the Church, and therefore the Church can give no assurance about its character."[1]

Again, even more specifically:—

"The tests of the validity of the Holy Eucharist are somewhat stringent. It must be celebrated with the proper matter, and the formula of consecration, that is, the words of institution must be recited; but it is not valid if celebrated by any person other than an ordained minister of priestly rank. . . . We must repeat that

[1] P. 376.

this does not necessarily deny that the sacraments used by other societies bring blessing with them, but it asserts that the Church knows nothing about them. It has defined the method of carrying out our Lord's command, in exercise of its due rights, and beyond this it cannot go, it can give no assurance of any kind."[1]

With respect to "the ordinance upon which the whole visible order of the Church turns—holy orders," Dr. STRONG speaks with no less decision and lucidity:—

"The process of ordination is sacramental. The power is conveyed by the act of laying-on of hands, which is the outward sign of the grace conferred. It is an act in which the Holy Spirit, the Guide and Ruler of the Church, is directly concerned. The essential feature of the whole act is the transmission of defined powers. An ordained person is not a plenipotentiary; he is free within the limits of his commission, but that is all. Hence the importance of the doctrine of succession. It is not that there is a mystical semi-magical efficacy in the apostolic source of the ordination gift, but that in this way only is the limitation preserved which the principle of transmission involves. The gift of holy orders must be transmitted by those to whom the function of transmission is assigned, and by no others."[2]

"The episcopal office, then, stamps with the authority of the Church all that is done with its *imprimatur;* it guarantees the validity of the orders conferred upon those who minister in the ordinary business of the Church, and so indirectly it affirms the validity of the sacraments they administer. . . . The orders bestowed by the bishop in the regular way are indelible. No person who has once been ordained can get rid of the fact, or be other than an ordained man. The grace of holy orders separates a man for the work of the Holy Spirit, and gives him a definite position and character. He may act unworthily of his high calling, or he may cease to act at all; but he does not on that account lose his priestly character. Moreover, his moral unworthiness, though it deprives him of much influence and power in the Church, does not strictly invalidate the sacraments he administers. At first sight this may seem a hard doctrine, but in reality it could hardly be otherwise. The ordained man is the chosen minister of God, to whom positive functions have been entrusted. It may be that he should never have sought orders at all, and some responsibility may rest with the bishop who ordained him; but, once given the orders cannot be denied; the gift is there, however unworthy the recipient."[3]

[1] P. 389. [2] P. 403. [3] P. 406.

This doctrine is representative: it was implicitly, if not also formally, adopted by the Pan-Anglican Conference, and it explains the suggestive fact that the proposal of intercommunion was limited to the episcopal churches. On the theory of apostolical succession non-episcopalians are not members of the visible Church in any effective sense. Intercommunion can but be between brethren, and the fraternal character in their case is denied. As individuals they may be called Christians; as members of non-episcopal churches they lie outside the covenant. The brutal conclusion may be stated kindly or crudely, but its character remains the same. "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

5. If proof were needed that the root of separation is not the "historic episcopate," but the dogma of apostolical succession which has been associated with it, I would point to the significant circumstance that where, as among the "High Church" Presbyterians, the dogma of apostolical succession is held apart from the episcopate, the same consequence follows. The following words by the late Dr. SPROTT, a learned and eminent Presbyterian minister, are suggestive:—

"The most learned Anglican writers are now admitting that episcopacy was gradually introduced, and was not universal in the primitive Church, and some of them are prepared not only to recognize presbyterian orders, but the Congregationalist ministry derived from the people. Here we must part company with them. Because the argument for the divine right of episcopacy breaks down, it by no means follows that ordination by presbyters, and apostolic succession through them, are not essential to a valid ministry."[1]

The rigid loyalty to the principle of apostolical

[1] "The Pentecostal Gift," p. 207.

succession which Dr. SPROTT and his friends exhibit does not succeed in propitiating the more relentless rigour of our episcopalians. Bishop GORE, with characteristic candour, has dealt faithfully with them in his recent book, "Orders and Unity":—

"There exists a school of Presbyterian theologians who seek to maintain, apparently, the whole principle of apostolic succession, only contending that the power of ordination belongs always essentially to the presbyter as well as the bishop, and can be validly exercised by him, at least on an emergency. On this basis they would maintain that the valid succession has been maintained in the Presbyterian churches; and would draw a distinction between the Presbyterians on the one hand and the mass of the Protestant bodies—Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, etc.—on the other.

"There does not seem to me to be evidence that, on the catholic principle of orders to which they appeal, they could justify the claim that the Presbyterian churches have 'maintained the succession,' even if the fundamental identity of presbyter and bishop were admitted. . . . But I speak with much more certainty when I say that the claim that a sixteenth-century presbyter had, even on an emergency, the same authority as a bishop to ordain, is totally unjustifiable. . . . These Scottish divines appeal to catholic principles and church law, and on catholic principles and church law they have, it must be emphatically said, no case at all."[1]

6. Bishop WORDSWORTH approaches the question in a more scholarly temper than Bishop GORE, but I do not observe that he reaches any different conclusion. He, no more than his colleague, is prepared to recognize the validity of Presbyterian orders, but he supposes that by borrowing from the past the practice of ordinations to the episcopate "*per saltum*," he will avoid the necessity of insisting upon re-ordination, and thus "save the face" of sensitive ecclesiastics who have none but Presbyterian orders.

"I should myself hold that a bishop was *ipso facto* ordained a priest, since the greater includes the less. A bishop is ordained

[1] "Orders and Unity," pp. 180—183.

to the 'sacerdotium' and to the highest kind of 'sacerdotium.' But in such a case (*i.e.*, of a *per saltum* consecration of a Presbyterian minister to the episcopate) it might be wise and right to add words to the ordinal so as to include the commission to dispense and minister the Word and sacraments, and to exercise the ministry of reconciliation, which according to our rite express the powers of the '*sacerdotium*' very much as they are expressed in the Sacramentary of SERAPION."[1]

7. The radical vice of the Lambeth method is that it implies an extension of a false principle. Many of the bishops are allowing themselves to be cheated with the notion that, if they recognize an apostolical succession through presbyters, they will make a great stride towards reunion. The very contrary is the case. Assuming their success in persuading the Presbyterians to respond to their approaches, they would have broken up a larger fellowship than they could create, and within their own communion, as the language of Bishop GORE sufficiently indicates, would have induced a formidable schism. Only by repudiating the dogma of apostolic succession can the "historic episcopate" be cleansed of that schismatic character which now so heavily compromises it in the eyes of a candid student of Church history. We must ask, then, whether there is anything in the law and constitution of the Church of England which requires us to maintain the dogma of apostolical succession, and thus prohibits us from recognizing as valid the non-episcopal ministries.

8. I maintain (i) that there is nothing in the standards of the English Church which can be fairly said to contain this dogma; (ii) that the history of the reformed Church proves that the reformers and

[1] "Unity and Fellowship," p. 52.

organisers of the Church did not hold it; (iii) that the Restoration settlement, though undoubtedly involving a measure of ecclesiastical isolation greater that had been previously known, did not really alter the Anglican doctrine of the ministry; (iv) that the dogma of "apostolical succession" was formulated by the tractarians, and has only become Anglican doctrine by consequence of their triumph in the hierarchy; (v) that the progress of historical science, and the lessons of Christian experience, require that the most liberal interpretation should be given to the language of the Anglican standards; (vi) that in the interest of Christian unity English churchmen are especially called upon to sustain by word and example a protest against the tractarian dogma of apostolical succession.

9. I believe that Bishop GORE is substantially right when he says that "there lay at the root of the whole Reformation movement the denial of the principle of the succession,"[1] but that he is almost grotesquely wrong when he separates the Church of England from that movement. I believe that the English reformers were in general agreement with their continental contemporaries and teachers "in repudiating with contempt the idea that the power to ordain pastors for the true Church of Christ depended upon succession to the officers, whether bishops or priests, of that communion."[2] I submit that the language of the preface to the ordinal and the 23rd Article must be interpreted in the light of the known beliefs, and well ascertained practice, of the authors of it: that no representative Anglican of the pre-tractarian period ever held

[1] P. 176. [2] P. 178.

the invalidity of non-episcopal orders, even the most severe, like ANDREWES, BANCROFT, LAUD, and COSIN, allowing that the circumstances of the continental churches justified their presbyterian ordinations; that no Anglican of importance placed such emphasis on organization as to make the very being of a church turn on it; that far more emphasis was placed on the autonomy of the nation, and the divinely conferred rights of the Christian monarch, than on a tactual succession from the Apostles; that the main point in the apostolic precedent was generally represented to be the existence in the Church of a superior or governing order of ministers, not a particular mode of ordaining such superior ministers; that intercommunion between the Church of England and the other reformed churches prevailed, and was never by any formal act destroyed; that even the Restoration settlement, while drawing tighter the reins of discipline within the Church, and raising higher than before the theory of episcopal authority, did not formally condemn as invalid non-episcopal ordinations, or actually and completely close the English Church to non-episcopal ministrations. On all these points ample evidence can be, and often has been, given. In this connection it is worth while to recall to memory an excellent but now generally forgotten book, GOODE'S "Divine Rule of Faith and Practice," originally published in 1841. In the second volume there is a useful discussion on the point, whether or not the dogma of apostolical succession is included in the Anglican system, and a large number of authorities are quoted.

10. I desire also to point out that the Bishop of

Salisbury underrates the significance of the clause in the Caroline Act of Uniformity which reserves to the Crown the right to appoint members of the foreign churches to English benefices, and greatly overrates the significance of the preface to the ordinal. His lordship thinks that the exempting clause "refers to a few exceptional bodies such as that which still worships in Canterbury Cathedral." I submit that a far more probable interpretation is that which sees in it the purpose of continuing the old hospitality to distinguished members of the foreign churches, which had been exercised by the King's predecessors, and which CHARLES II., who had received kindness from the foreign Protestants, was scarcely in a position decently to refuse. Be this as it may, it would appear that the clause was actually used to introduce foreign ministers with presbyterian ordination into English benefices. "Shortly after it became law," says Dr. SPROTT,

> "A French Protestant who was ordained by presbyters in France was admitted to a rectory in Kent without re-ordination, in succession to a minister who had been deprived because he had been ordained by presbyters in England during the Rebellion. PHILIP HENRY, father of the commentator, writes in his diary, under the year 1672: 'Suppose a Dutch or French protestant minister to come into England to preach, he is not re-ordained, but only licensed'; and so late as 1820 many of the parochial clergy in the Channel Islands, which form part of the diocese of Winchester, had only presbyterian ordination. A generation ago many of the missionaries sent out by the Propagation Society, which is presided over by the whole bench of bishops, were foreigners in presbyterian orders."[1]

It must surely be apparent, in view of these facts, that we are required to see in the exempting clause of

[1] "The Pentecostal Gift," p. 206.

the Caroline Act of Uniformity a clearly implied disclaimer of the notion that non-episcopal orders are in themselves invalid. So preposterous a notion could not have been entertained by the Anglican leaders, who had but yesterday been communicating in presbyterian churches, and officiating as ministers in them. The cautious language of Dr. SANDAY will perhaps serve as a sufficient substitute for the mass of evidence which could easily be produced if its production were necessary:—

"It should be distinctly borne in mind that the more sweeping refusal to recognize the non-episcopal reformed churches is not, and can never be made, a doctrine of the Church of England. Too many of her most representative men have not shared in it. HOOKER did not hold it; ANDREWES expressly disclaimed it; COSIN freely communicated with the French Reformed Church during his exile. Indeed it is not until the last half of the present century that more than a relatively small minority of English churchmen have been committed to it."[1]

11. It is very noteworthy that the relatively liberal doctrine of the Anglican divines in the past was reached in spite of their defective knowledge of Christian origins. Almost all of them held the apostolical institution of diocesan episcopacy to be historically demonstrable, and when the course of controversy shifted the field of debate from the New Testament to the patristic literature, they found their dialectical advantage overwhelming. Nevertheless, so firmly rooted were they in their grand principle, that the essentials of Christianity must be plainly laid down in the Scripture, and so clearly did they perceive that questions of ecclesiastical organization were properly subordinate to the higher considerations of faith and morals, that they were

[1] "The Conception of Priesthood," p. 95.

content to justify their own position without either passing judgment on the position of others, or deducing from it the dolorous necessity of breaking Christian fellowship. Had they possessed the knowledge which underlies such writings as Bishop LIGHTFOOT'S famous "Dissertation," or HATCH'S no less famous Bampton Lectures, or Bishop WORDSWORTH'S "Ministry of Grace," or Principal LINDSAY'S "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," or BIGG'S "Origins of Christianity," or GWATKIN'S "Early Church History," their position would have been greatly strengthened, and such embarrassments as some of them exhibited would have been wholly removed. It is one of the strangest and most perplexing spectacles conceivable, that the new rigidity of Anglicans should have developed coincidently with an advance in historical science, which seems to invalidate its most essential presupposition. I apprehend the reason to be the new attitude of mind taken up to the Reformation movement itself. The Anglicans of the past, whatever might be their opinions as to the authority and value of the historic episcopate, drew a deep line between the Churches of the Reformation and the unreformed Churches; they regarded the Church of England as "the beauty and strength of the Reformation." The modern tractarians, like their ablest and latest exponent, Bishop GORE, regard the Reformation with dislike, habitually belittle it, and appear to separate the Church of England from any real share in the common movement. Accordingly the supremacy of tractarianism is proving itself a principle of complete Anglican isolation. "Intercommunion" between Anglicans and Protestants is absolutely

inconsistent with the dogma of apostolical succession. The tractarian theory of an "historic episcopate" is fatal to "the expression of Christian brotherhood in Holy Communion and interchange of pulpits."

12. The Bishop of Salisbury thinks it necessary to excuse himself for speaking in a Lutheran church in Germany, and is careful to explain that, though present at a celebration of the Holy Communion at Upsala, he did not communicate. His lordship's objection to English clergymen preaching in nonconformist chapels, and *vice versâ*, is "that such acts confuse the minds of our own people as to who has the right to teach them." Let any one think out soberly the implications and logical requirements of such language, and he will need no farther evidence of the impossibility of fraternal relations between Bishop WORDSWORTH'S type of Anglican and every form of non-episcopalian and nonconformist. Bishop WORDSWORTH, moreover, represents the scholarly and moderate tractarian. In his case the whole difficulty lies in the false theory which dominates his thinking, and goes far to neutralize his erudition. Lesser and less learned minds admit other and lower motives—jealousy, the pride of office, the suspicions of bigotry, the blinding spirit of religious rivalry.

Dr. BRIGGS, himself a convert from presbyterianism to the Anglican communion, has recently published a book on Church unity, which, in spite of some characteristic whimsicalities, is very well worth study. I will bring my paper to a close by quoting and endorsing a few words from his pages:—

"It would be wholesome if the Church of England would return

to the principles of its own reformers. Protestant orders all rest firmly on the ground of the right of reformation and revolution. History justifies that right. When the time of the greater reformation comes, the Roman Church will recognize the right of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and then, and then only, will the mutual recognition of orders take place in a reunited and reconstructed Christianity."[1]

[1] P. 120.

III

THINGS ESSENTIAL AND THINGS NON-ESSENTIAL

It needs no argument in a reformed Church that a distinction may rightly be drawn between the various parts of the traditional Christian system, and that some of these may for sufficient reasons be modified or wholly taken away. In the 20th Article it is laid down that the Catholic Church itself may not "decree anything against Holy Writ, nor besides the same enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." The 21st Article affirms the errancy of general councils, and declares roundly that "things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture." The 34th Article repudiated the notion that "traditions and ceremonies" must be everywhere the same, and declares that "every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies and rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying." This liberal doctrine was liberally interpreted by the fathers of the English Reformation. They effected a religious revolution. Alike in doctrine and in discipline the whole ecclesiastical system of the country was changed. In the

higher interest of Christian truth and liberty the visible unity of the Church was broken up, and with respect to the older organization of the parent Church the position of a "separated body" was deliberately accepted. It is, therefore, evident that the English churchman enters on the discussion of the subject before us with great advantages. His history and the explicit teaching of his Church require him to adopt towards other "separated bodies" an attitude of discrimination and large tolerance.

Applying, then, the principles of the English Reformation, as they are set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles, to the present situation, we must ask how far it may be possible, without infidelity to essential Christianity, so to improve our relations to our fellow Christians as to mitigate the religious isolation, which at present weighs so heavily on the Anglican churchman, and so gravely weakens his influence for good.

Once postulate the authority of scripture as the criterion of essentials, and it is manifest that these are greatly limited. The ground is cleared of most of the issues which divide the churches. Thus questions of specific forms of the Christian ministry, of disciplinary procedure, of the mode of public worship, of "establishment" or non-establishment, are ruled out. None of these can be brought within the definition of essentials. We are free to debate them calmly on the ground of expediency. In the actual circumstances, what is their value? How far do they really serve for the edifying of the Church?

In the answering of these questions we must ascribe the greatest importance to the lessons of history. We

must not force the witness of experience into the service of some rigid ecclesiastical theory. Wherever the moral effects of Christianity, "the fruits of the Spirit," are exhibited in any system, which holds fast to the essentials, we must recognize, eagerly and gratefully, the ecclesiastical character, and claim the privilege of Christian fellowship.

The formal definition of the Church in the 19th Article seems to provide us with the platform which is needed:—

> "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of GOD is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to CHRIST'S ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

In the sixteenth century this definition was conditioned by the exaggerated nationalism which imposed territorial boundaries on every church, and identified ecclesiastical dissent with civil treason. In the twentieth century, however, these conditions have disappeared, and we may apply the definition of the 19th Article to the religious communities which claim to be churches without confusing our minds with considerations which are properly less religious than political.

Are there any bodies of Christians, at present exiles from our fellowship, which yet answer to our own definition of what a Christian Church essentially is?

Let us illustrate the argument with a concrete example. It will not be denied that the Wesleyan Methodist Church is "a congregation of faithful (*i.e.*, believing) men," or that in it "the pure word of God is preached," or that the sacrament of Holy Baptism is duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance.

Perhaps we shall all so far be agreed. With respect to the Lord's Supper, there will be difference of opinion; and yet, when the matter is seriously considered, I do not think it will be possible to deny in the case of this sacrament also that the necessary conditions of validity are satisfied.

So far as the actual administration of the sacrament is concerned, the case is admittedly clear. The elements which Christ appointed are used, and His word is unfailingly rehearsed. The sole objection is to the status of the officiating minister. Is he a duly ordained minister?

Leaving out of consideration the question whether a duly ordained minister is "by Christ's ordinance" essential to a valid administration of the Holy Communion, and looking only to the point whether or not a minister, ordained according to the rules of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, is duly ordained, we surely must admit that there is nothing in the New Testament, or in the formal doctrine of the Church of England, which compels a negative answer.

That Christ laid down no rules on the subject of the ministry is apparent to every student of the New Testament, and by our Anglican hypothesis we are limited to Christ's ordinance, when we would determine what is "of necessity requisite" to the due ministration of the sacraments. There is assuredly quite as much in Christ's teaching to disallow non-episcopal administration of baptism as to disallow non-episcopal administration of the Holy Communion. The 23rd Article, moreover, sets forth a doctrine of the Christian ministry which, since the general

abandonment of the old political conception of a Church as properly co-extensive with the nation, must be allowed to extend to associations of believers, which are not formed on a political or territorial basis.

"Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by en who have publick authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

I have mentioned the case of the Wesleyan Methodist Church only by way of illustration. The principle which would permit—and which I honestly believe does require—us frankly to recognize the ecclesiastical character of that body, would manifestly demand a wider application, an application wide enough to bring within our religious fellowship all those "separated bodies" which agree with us in the essentials of faith and morals, and in the reverent use of the sacraments of the Gospel.

IV

INTERCOMMUNION AND REUNION[1]

THERE is no necessity to offer reasons for thinking that the divisions of the Church are evil in themselves, and widely mischievous in their results. We have moved beyond the point of thinking that competition between denominations is the ideal condition of spiritual efficiency, and are now concerned with the urgent practical question how we shall lift from our shoulders the incapacitating burden of inherited sectarianism. We have some advantages which our predecessors had not. It will suffice to specify three:—

1. We are no longer committed to the belief that the Divine Founder of the Christian Church did, either directly, or through the agency of His disciples, appoint an organization of the Church in advance of its history. We know this now, not only because the New Testament contains no clear prescriptions to that effect, but also because we find that the Apostolic Church was so filled with the expectation of the second advent of Christ, that it is not conceivable that the Church should have been organized on the supposition which conflicted with this universal and dominant conviction.

2. We have done with the unhistorical though

[1] A Paper read to the Islington Clerical Society on Tuesday, October 12, 1909.

attractive notion of a "primitive Church," in which the mind of Christ was better understood, and in which the statutes of the Apostles were observed. We know that there was no such golden age, competent to provide a norm of faith and doctrine, and that any serious attempt to construct a modern Church on the primitive model would speedily end in failure. We smile as we read the exalted and reverent terms in which the Anglican divines refer to the third and fourth centuries, some of them courageously adventuring so far down the thickening current of time as to speak of the "first six centuries." We know, thanks to the development of historical studies among us, that the "primitive Church" does not merit this regard. The late Professor BIGG has observed with truth of the third century, the age of TERTULLIAN and CYPRIAN and IRENÆUS, that "that miserable century, when the world was full of suffering and disaster, was the true beginning of the dark ages." It is only when the fathers are read in the picked passages of the controversialists that they can serve as religious authorities for modern guidance.

3. We have witnessed the definite disproving by the logic of facts of the ancient belief that the spiritual power of Christianity depends on the organization of the Church. Up to the sixteenth century, in spite of many schisms and long epochs of conflict, the external unity of the Catholic Church had remained the postulate of Christians. The episcopal system, submerged indeed in the East by the supremacy of the Emperor and the Tsar, and in the West by that of the Pope, had persisted, and the whole sacramental system, carrying the vitalizing graces of the Incarnation to the faithful, was linked

with episcopacy. The Reformation destroyed this immemorial and universal unity of government. National churches variously organized came on the scene, and these gave birth to other churches organized on some principle which was not guaranteed by any authority beyond that of individual consciences. For some while it was legitimate, nay it was inevitable, that thoughtful and learned men, who could confront the occurrences of their own age with the previous experiences of the Christian society, should regard these new churches as ephemeral associations, born of passion and conflict, and destined to pass away. But as time passed, and generation succeeded generation, and these new churches took root and became powerful institutions, it was inevitable that men's minds should be affected by the fact. Justice is not done to the thinkers of the past unless the situation in which they ordered their thinking is recalled. One reason why the Anglicans of the pre-Laudian age were so much larger-minded than their successors of the Restoration is the circumstance that, whereas they looked out on a Christendom which was fairly divided between the reformed churches and the impossible Church of Rome, and saw quite clearly the obvious union which existed between themselves and the reformers elsewhere, the Caroline divines saw everything and everybody through the blinding mist of prejudice, natural indeed but not on that account the less misleading, which the civil war and the years of banishment had created. In 1660 it was a reasonable thing to believe that non-episcopalian Christianity could not survive. For in England and Scotland it had been discredited by the sectarian excesses of the civil war,

and had been violently suppressed by the State; on the Continent it was gasping with exhaustion after the Thirty Years' War (1618—1648), and was plainly threatened by the quickly rising power of the French monarchy. Outside of Europe there was nothing but the infant colonies of New England, which had as yet attained no importance. Only the episcopal Church of England seemed to have any firm promise of continuance. SOUTH said that "the only thing that made Protestantism considerable in Christendom was the Church of England." In such circumstances it was not surprising that Anglicans regarded as a transitory factor in Christendom that non-episcopal Christianity which the Reformation of the preceding century had developed. In 1909, how different is the outlook! Non-episcopal Christianity now is a waxing factor in Christendom, and seems to have a future in the non-Christian world grander than any which the older episcopal churches can look forward to. In the middle of the eighteenth century nonconformity in this country was almost a negligible quantity; at the present time, so far as the statistics of denominationalism can show the facts, at least half of the serious Christians in the nation are enrolled as members of some nonconformist church. Even this statement does not present the full significance of the change. A century ago nonconformists were intellectually and socially a feeble folk; they were shut out of the universities; they were disqualified for many civic and political functions; they lay under considerable disadvantages. It was legitimate to suppose that education and nonconformity were naturally opposed. To-day we can take account

of the consequences of creating a condition of equality between Anglicans and nonconformists. I myself heard a Regius Professor in the Oxford Convocation declare, as a matter well known to the theological teachers of the university, that their best students came from the nonconformist college; the greater denominations are boldly bringing their theological colleges to Oxford and Cambridge, and finding their courageous policy abundantly justified. Sir HARRY REICHEL, the principal of the North Wales University College, told the Manchester Church Congress last year that the balance of educational efficiency in the principality now inclined on the side of nonconformity. If the Presbyterian churches of the north be added to the non-episcopal denominations of the south, and account be taken of the intellectual "output" of the churches of Great Britain, I believe it will be found that the best books are now being written by non-episcopalians, except perhaps in liturgiology and in certain branches of textual and Biblical criticism, where Anglican scholars are still at the head of their contemporaries. All this here at home, where the Church of England has been buttressed by privilege for centuries, and still commands the enormous prestige implied in establishment and endowment, and includes the socially important classes in its membership. But go across the seas to America and the Colonies, and you find yourself confronted by a still more amazing situation. There the Anglican communion is one of the smaller factors of organized religion. It ranks as seventh in point of size among the Protestant churches of the United States, and includes only 886,942 communicants out of 20,597,954 in a total population

of over 84,000,000. In the colonies the situation is better, but nowhere is Anglicanism dominant, in spite of the fact that the colonists have mostly been trained in Anglican schools. Go still farther afield; take into account the non-Christian lands, and everywhere the most considerable and energetic missions are those of the non-episcopal churches. The future is not with episcopacy anywhere, unless, indeed, episcopacy be so transformed as to become reconcileable with evangelical Christianity. In all these reckonings we must never forget that the term "episcopal" is applied indiscriminately to Anglicans, who yet, as all the world knows, are deeply divided on this very point, many being genuinely evangelical and some being episcopalian.

In view, then, of these facts, the modern Anglican cannot seriously suppose that non-episcopal Christianity is a transitory phenomenon, born of conflict, and carrying within itself the seeds of death. He sees the proofs of indestructible vitality multiplying on all sides, and in many lands.

4. From all these circumstances a plain man would infer that whatever else may be indispensable for the restoration of Christian union, agreement in the episcopal polity cannot be so. If indeed agreement in a single polity be indispensable, then there is but one such polity which can with any pretence to reason advance the claim. The older Anglicans, like BARROW, thought that they could exempt episcopacy from such comparison, by showing that it was clearly commanded in the New Testament, and actually appointed by the Apostles; but we are all agreed now that neither of these propositions can be sustained. Episcopacy as

much as the Papacy has to build its claim to acceptance on the argument of historical development; and when once that argument is allowed, there can be no question as to the superior strength of the Roman position. Even now it is still arguable that Christianity may ultimately survive only in the Roman Catholic version; there is sufficient strength and fervour in the Roman Church to excuse, if certainly not to justify, the claim of its members to be the "One Holy Catholic and Universal Church." But to claim as much for episcopal Christianity, standing severely separate from the Roman autocracy on the one hand, and Protestant evangelicalism on the other, is not a reasonable proceeding.

5. If, then, this notion that some form of ecclesiastical polity is indispensable be set aside, and we address ourselves to the practical question without being compelled to press for the victory of some organization, the whole situation becomes immensely more hopeful. The variety of denominations, we can see, need not conflict with genuine Christian unity; although their individualism and competition are manifestly inconsistent with any fraternity worthy the name. When once we have cleared our minds on this score, and recognized the potential validity of separate organizations, we can begin to distinguish between false and true versions of the one faith. History teaches us that the wilfulness of schismatics has had but a slight share in creating, and need have no share at all in perpetuating, the separate churches of Christendom; into the separations naturally, and therefore validly, created there has quickly entered the sinful temper of schism, and then the whole

development of the separate churches has been a diseased and perverse development. Banish that temper of schism, and in its place bring the temper of fraternity, and then everything is possible. "Charity never faileth."

6. Let me develop this point somewhat more carefully. If you look closely into the divisions of Christendom you will soon perceive this very suggestive, and in some sense reassuring, fact, that underlying them are circumstances which have no connection with religion as such. Ask yourself why the Reformation followed mainly racial lines. Latin and Celtic remained Roman; Teutonic and Scandinavian became Protestant. The line is not of course hard and fast; there are Protestant Latins and Celts; and there are Roman Catholic Teutons and Scandinavians, but, broadly, it is true that the dividing line falls between the races. Why do the denominations here in England correspond so closely with the strata of society? The upper classes are Anglican; the commercial aristocracy, Unitarian and Presbyterian; the middle class, Congregational; the upper artisans, Baptists and Wesleyans; the lower artisans, Methodists; the unskilled and squalid sections passing everywhere into some form of "corybantic Christianity." Why in America are the Methodists and Baptists far more successful with the coloured people than the other Protestants? and why does the Roman system prevail among the semi-pagan South Americans and Mexicans? To answer these questions dispassionately is to admit, that the existing divisions of Christianity may at least in some measure have a legitimate basis in the varying requirements of various humanity. In view of the witness of Christian history,

as it is uttered in the existing varieties of Christianity, it is an arrogant thing to claim that episcopacy is even of the *bene esse* of the Church; to claim that episcopacy is of the *esse* of the Church appears to be so deeply irrational that it needs no formal confutation.

7. So reasonable is all this that even the advocates of exclusive episcopacy are now freely disclaiming the intention to demand uniformity. Not uniformity but unity they say, but at the same time reserving this very point of government, where alone the question is now practical. If only Anglicans, and especially Anglican bishops, would clear their minds of cant! Take the great types of English-speaking religion. They are distinctive, that is, they genuinely correspond with varieties of natural temperament and necessity precisely at this point where episcopacy comes in. Episcopacy as expressed in the constitution of the "Representative Church Council" is oligarchic; Presbyterianism is constitutional and parliamentary; Congregationalism is democratic. In the absence of any divine teaching to the contrary, or of any governing apostolic institution, or of any clear and binding historical precedents—and so much our present argument assumes—how can you reasonably insist that the democratic congregationalist shall accept the oligarchic polity of the episcopalian, and then comfort him by allowing a freedom from liturgical forms in his ordinary worship? You prohibit his main and justifying principle, and you concede a mere fashion or preference which has no principle behind it.

8. When we have reached the point of allowing that

there is no necessary breach of unity in the co-existence of variously organized churches, we have taken a great step forward. We have left the Pan-Anglican position behind, and opened the gate to immediate and fruitful advances towards a practical fraternity. We have to determine on what basis we shall recognize churches. Postulating that all true Christians are verily brethren, and that they are bound as such to give outward form to their spiritual relationship, we are at once brought to the question of intercommunion. For the Holy Communion is by universal consent the divinely appointed symbol and guarantee of Christian fraternity. It is the "Lord's Supper," and may not without profanation be bent to the service of any lesser service than the Lord's. Once make the Holy Communion a denominational act, and you rob it of its true significance. I may observe that the Church of England, with conspicuous wisdom, has connected no denominational claim with the Holy Communion. The moral and spiritual conditions of worthy communion—repentance, charity, and faith—are stated in the invitation to the Holy Communion, and the decision of competence is referred, save only in the necessary case of grave public scandal, to the conscience of the intending communicant. The rubric at the end of the Confirmation Service is certainly not designed to state an universal obligation, binding on all Christians, but only the domestic rule for members of the English Church. We are quickly brought then to the necessary minimum of Christian doctrine; and here there can be little fault found with the proposal of the Lambeth Conference, that the two ancient creeds, the Apostles' Creed and

the Nicene Creed, should be accepted as the sufficient statement of Christian belief. It is manifest that in thus making use of ancient formularies a reasonable latitude of interpretation is indispensable; but on the main issue of the Christian's attitude towards the Master these creeds, taken in connection with the two sacraments, and the practice of Christian worship, will be found adequate. Remember, we are considering what shall be the basis of intercommunion of churches, not what shall be the right treatment of specific individuals. For a basis of negotiation between churches these ancient creeds, formally adopted, and reasonably understood, would suffice. See where this would carry us. Leaving on one side the Unitarians, who are a small community in Christendom, and eccentrics like those who are now calling themselves, somewhat oddly, "New Theologians," we should find ourselves in touch with the whole of the great English-speaking churches. This is a basis of negotiation, not of settlement. Agreed on points of fundamental doctrine, and expressing our agreement by a formal acceptance of these two ancient formularies of faith, we can recognize the existence of the Christian character, and proceed to discuss with temper and hopefulness the practical question. In the interest of discipleship itself, Holy Communion must be conditioned by previous instruction, and by a formal recognition of the instructed. In theory every church admits this; but in practice there is great confusion, very little mutual knowledge, often great carelessness in enforcing formal rules. Why should not the churches, or some of them, come to a definite arrangement on

that point, so that throughout the whole area of Protestant Christianity the indispensable elements of the Christian faith should be seriously taught to those who are to be admitted to Holy Communion, and the character of communicant should carry a definite assurance of so much knowledge? I would make the covenant of intercommunion involve a restoration of discipline in the churches, securing careful instruction in the faith, and a formal admission of the instructed person into communion after a public profession of belief. BAXTER in his admirable treatise on "Confirmation" believed that it was possible to find an Irenicon in that ordinance.

> "Here is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint (being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half, by the Anabaptists), that nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, wilful enmity to the peace of the churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success."

The point of agreement was the necessity of a profession of faith from everyone "that layeth claim to Church privileges and ordinances proper to adult members." In the seventeenth century the greatest Anglicans, like ANDREWES, were opposed to confirmation of young children, although already the disposition was showing itself to magnify the quasi-sacramental aspect of the ordinance, and to administer it to mere children. If we could agree, not of course in the ceremony of Confirmation, which might well be left to the discretion of the churches, but in the substance of teaching, and in the solemnity and formal character of the public profession, and if the communicant members were duly enrolled and the registers carefully guarded,

then the churches would be equipped for mutual alliance, and intercommunion on the basis of the two creeds would be a practical policy. I may observe that the educational advance of the non-episcopalian clergy, to which I adverted above, tends to facilitate a working arrangement of the kind indicated. If common education in theology for the ministers of the federated churches could also be developed, a relatively easy matter, towards which some advances have already been made with very happy consequences, the reasonableness of such an agreement for the teaching of communicants in all the churches would be made more than ever evident.

9. I shall perhaps be asked what precisely intercommunion would mean in practice. Well, two things obviously. Travelling communicants of all the federated churches would possess a recognized title to the good offices of every church within the federation. There would be an end of the sad situation which at present exists, in which genuine Christians are not free, or feel themselves not free, to receive the Lord's Supper, when they are so placed as to be outside the ministrations of their particular denomination. That is one advantage, and no slight one. Then, on special occasions, and in connection with common Christian efforts, all the federated churches would act together, arranging in some central and convenient church a celebration of the Holy Communion at which denominational distinctions should be frankly ignored, and all the world should be able to see a visible and solemn affirmation of Christian fellowship. This also would be an advantage of no slight value. Best of all, when once such frank mutual recognition had been established,

it would be not only possible, but even inevitable, to take steps to put an end to the wasteful and irritating competition, and overlapping, which now everywhere weaken religion. I was studying the religious census of the United States recently, and observed with melancholy wonder the evidence it affords of overlapping due to religious separatism. For the twenty million communicants or members of the Protestant churches, no less than fifty-three million sittings in church are provided. This, in a population of eighty-four millions, means that there are sufficient sittings provided to accommodate the entire population of the United States, excluding those who may fairly be supposed to be prevented by sufficient causes from attending. Yet all the churches are continually lamenting the spiritual destitution of the country, and exerting themselves to build more churches. If there were reasonable co-operation there would be no spiritual destitution, and the efforts now being directed to church-building could be directed into other channels. In a less flagrant degree the same thing is true of this country. Even the least impressionable and most rigidly denominational of people are being compelled to take account of the irrational wastefulness of denominational competition. If, then, there were a federation of churches expressed in the covenant of intercommunion, the door would be open for friendly arrangements, by which these mischiefs of competition and overlapping could be abated. There would be no hindrance to the free action of Christian common sense, and the healing influence of true religion.

10. I say nothing of the more distant consequences

of the situation, the improvement of relationships throughout the country, the elimination of the bitter political prejudices which are now able to fasten on to the older denominational strifes, and charge them with a new and venomous significance. Even the vexed question of disestablishment would have another and a less hopeless aspect when it was wholly severed from any suspicion of sectarian jealousy, and could be discussed in connection with the single interest of Christ's kingdom. Disendowment might well be removed from the policy, when the whole subject was regarded, not as the interest of a single church, but as the common concern of the whole federation. On these points, however, I forbear to dwell.

11. It may be said that such a project is chimerical. I reply, first, that the hopeful beginnings of federation are already existent in America, where a federal council of no less than thirty-three churches, including seventeen out of the twenty million Protestant communicants, has been formed with the hope of developing into something effective. The objects of this federation are thus formulated:—

1. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

2. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

3. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.

4. To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote

the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

Next, I reply that whatever difficulties may attach to such a federation of Christian churches on the basis of fundamental belief are as nothing compared with those which obstruct the success of the Lambeth policy. The exaltation of episcopal government into a first principle of Christianity has gone very far, and is being pressed with almost feverish energy. Young bishops in great sees, with vast enthusiasm and a great reserve of physical strength, richly endowed with popular gifts, and personally lovable on many counts, are throwing themselves into the episcopalian crusade, and it would be idle to deny that a considerable effect is coming from their efforts. Anglican history has been re-written from the episcopalian point of view. Even the popular device of the pageant has been resorted to in order to advertise the episcopate, and stamp on the popular mind the notion of the Anglican Church as *sui generis*, whose very essential character is uttered in the episcopate. Along with this various teaching has gone a policy of separation. A wedge is being driven between English churchmen and their fellow religionists. Even where co-operation has existed in the past, constant and earnest efforts are being made to prevent its continuance. I will not allude to the educational controversy, beyond observing that there was the pre-eminent opportunity for the Church of England to have recovered fraternity with evangelical nonconformists, and that the opportunity was wilfully, almost insolently, wasted. We come out of that conflict more completely isolated and self-satisfied than we went into

it. No retrospect could well be sadder to a serious observer of English Christianity. A new importance is being attached to everything in the Prayer Book which separates; oblivion is falling upon everything which reconciles. In India a squalid controversy over the use of the garrison churches has resulted in a formal separation between the Anglicans and Presbyterians, instead of being made the occasion of a natural and salutary co-operation. In Canada, where a most hopeful attempt to build up a national church on the basis of evangelical faith is in progress, the Church of England refuses to have anything to do with it. This is but one of the ill-consequences of the Pan-Anglican conferences, which necessarily have the effect of magnifying episcopal authority, and tying the colonial and missionary churches to the narrow platform which the mother Church adopts for herself. What possibility of success is there in the policy of resolute episcopalianism? What can come of it but a deepening alienation of the general conscience, and a shrivelling of the Church into an episcopalian sect? Meanwhile the clergy are being trained increasingly in theological colleges where the corner stone of the teaching is that false doctrine o "apostolical succession," from which inevitably flow all the historic consequences of sacerdotalism. Even the evangelical party yields to the prevailing current, and affects to believe in a theory which is absolutely inconsistent with the first postulate of spiritual religion. Truly the outlook is not hopeful for one who seeks the peace of Jerusalem. Meanwhile there are great questions, going to the foundations of the faith and morals of the Christian Church, which are demanding attention, the

wise answering of which will require all the varied wisdom and learning of the churches, and which cannot be rightly handled by a hierarchy which finds its claim to attention, and its certificate of spiritual competence, in an historical fiction. Yet this we may remember for our comfort: there are forces too strong for the currents of insular prejudice and the narrow fervour of Anglican sectarianism, and these will compel, though perhaps with much loss and suffering to individuals, the final conquest of the truth. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, for lo, the kingdom of God is within you."

V

ANGLICANISM AND REUNION[1]

WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST JESUS AS LORD, AND OURSELVES AS YOUR SERVANTS FOR JESUS' SAKE.
2 CORINTHIANS IV. 5.

TRINITY SUNDAY is "the Festival of Revelation." We bless God for His self-manifestation in His Son. We lift up our hearts from earth to heaven, and reverently exult in the "knowledge" of the Father, which has been opened to us by the ministry of the Incarnate. All other aspects of the Gospel are seen to be secondary and contingent. This is primary and fundamental. From the right understanding of the mind of God, and the true apprehension of His essential Being, there will grow, there cannot but grow, the perception of right relationship with Him, and, if with Him, then manifestly also with man, and with nature, which are His creatures and vestures and instruments. Theology is the effort to state intelligibly that primary and fundamental truth about God: morality is the effort to draw out in practice its rightful implicit obligations. Thus all Christianity, alike in the region of thought and in that of conduct, is gathered up in the faith, which we profess to-day. "This is life eternal,

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on Trinity Sunday, June 14, 1908, being the eve of the Pan-Anglican Congress.

that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

By a just and natural association of ideas the festival of revelation has become the festival of mission. Trinity Sunday is the principal time for ordination. The knowledge of God, made known once for all to mankind in and through Christ, has to be brought to the successive generations of the human race through the visible society of Christians, the holy Catholic Church; and this solemn task can only be fulfilled by the Church as such—not a mere multitude of volunteers scattering at will over the earth, and proclaiming what truth they could perceive for themselves; but the ordered society of Christ's disciples, not alone carrying the message of saving grace to individual sinners, but also offering the sphere of a true social life, and recalling humanity at every point of its natural self-expression to its true ideal. "Thy kingdom come" is the aspiration of Christians, and the "coming of the kingdom" cannot possibly be identified with a mere preaching of individual salvation; it must include the building up on the earth of a righteous order, which shall make possible the fullest development of individual life. Every ordered society, moreover, must be organized, and disciplined; and both organization and discipline presuppose a duly constituted government. Therefore the Church must have its ministry, appointed to office with publicity, solemnity, and according to a recognized system. The mission of the Incarnate Son of God is perpetuated in the mission of the visible Church, and this mission of the visible Church is, in certain important senses, fulfilled through the duly appointed ministry. So far

there is a practical unanimity among Christians. At this point, however, the acutest and most deplorable controversies have arisen; and at this moment the visible Church is broken up into fragments precisely on the very matter, which it might have been supposed would have been the guarantee of ecclesiastical harmony. The exclusive claims of one or another hierarchy are rending asunder the society of believers. To add an element of whimsical pathos to the situation, every exclusive claim is urged on the specific ground that the unity of the Church is at stake in its recognition. Thus the advocate of the exclusive validity of the Roman Catholic ministry is never weary of upholding the Papacy as the very pledge and instrument of ecclesiastical oneness; and you have but to glance at the waxing literature of episcopalian advocacy to see that the interest of unity is constantly pleaded in excuse for an unyielding attitude on the subject of "apostolic succession." How empty of value such contentions are is apparent to every one who is not himself an interested party. The Papacy has not preserved unity, for the tremendous schism of east and west, and the break up of western Christendom, and the melancholy alienation of multitudes of its own adherents throughout the sphere of its authority, demonstrate the contrary. Episcopacy is equally impotent, as the situation throughout the English-speaking world attests. Whatever else may be true about divine rights vested in hierarchies, it cannot be questioned that they are not really favourable to that ecclesiastical unity which they claim to secure. It is remarkably suggestive that the New Testament provides no clear teaching on the subject of

the constitution of the Christian ministry. This statement is by no means invalidated, or even weakened, by the fact that every form of ecclesiastical order is supposed by its advocates to be based on the witness of scripture. The single circumstance, that there has been no agreement as to the meaning and reference of the passages advanced in controversy—that Christian students, equally sincere and equally well qualified, have differed in their interpretation of the same texts—demonstrates that those texts do not bear a clear sense, which none can miss. It is the case that the nearer we approach to the source of the Christian ministry, the more impossible it is to perceive its precise constitution; that the farther we travel from that source, the more definite becomes its theory, the more extensive its claims, the more rigid its form. To any reflective Christian it cannot but be a matter for deep and anxious consideration, what ought to be the effect on his present action of this remarkable difference between the earliest and the latest phases of Christianity. Now, when Christian men are everywhere lamenting their "unhappy divisions"; when from all sides evidence is accumulating as to the miserable consequences of those divisions; when the responsible authorities in every branch of the Christian Church are debating what steps may be taken to recover some measure of working harmony; now, surely, if ever, every one of us is bound to inquire for himself whether we can as a church be justified in placing the Christian ministry, or rather, the precise constitution of the Christian ministry, in a position of fundamental importance, which assuredly it did not hold in the days of the apostolic founders of the Church.

Moreover, when from the New Testament we pass to the records of the early Church, and endeavour to collect from them some accurate information as to the actual system which then prevailed, we find that the silence of the apostolic writings is interpreted by the manifoldness of the primitive polity. Our historical scholars have recovered for us the knowledge of ecclesiastical conditions in the first two centuries, and we perceive that the Church then, when the apostolic tradition was recent and powerful, was variously organized. In Asia Minor there were bishops; in Rome and Alexandria there were none. Along with both bishops and presbyters were still to be found through a great part of that period the representatives of the oldest ministry of all, that of "prophets" and "apostles" called to their work by direct and manifest action of the Holy Spirit. Let me observe that this better knowledge of the primitive Church is a very recent thing, and has not yet extended itself over the greater part of our communion. The older generation of clergyman was taught to believe in the "apostolic succession" through bishops as a doctrine securely based on scripture and history; the older text-books, which still retain their place in many theological colleges and in countless clerical libraries, present a view of primitive Christian history which reflects the clear-cut theory which the writers held, but are dangerously defective as records of historic fact. Take this single example from one of the very best of those manuals, the work of a great scholar, whose memory is justly honoured in the Church—Bishop WORDSWORTH of Lincoln—

"The universal practice of the Church of Christ, from its foundation for more than fifteen hundred years without interruption,

shows episcopacy to be of divine institution, and to have been regarded by the Church as of inviolable authority."[1]

This statement, clear, categorical, admitting apparently no modification, and leading manifestly to one conclusion, may have been possible in the state of knowledge which existed in 1843, when the manual called "Theophilus Anglicanus" was published, but assuredly it is not possible now. Episcopacy, we know, was not the original constitution of the Christian Church; it was not universal for at least two centuries; if divine institution be held to imply dominical or apostolic appointment, and to convey exclusive validity, then episcopacy cannot be credited with divine institution.

In view, then, of this better knowledge of the primitive history, ought it not reasonably to follow that the Anglican doctrine with respect to episcopacy should be modified, or rather, that the older Anglican doctrine should be restored, and the exalted episcopalianism which is now dominant should be laid aside?

Undoubtedly there is much unrest of the Anglican conscience on the subject. Even the advocates of exclusive episcopalianism appear to be adopting a line of argument which mitigates in phrase, if in nothing else, the intolerable arrogance of the older theory. Thus the Pauline metaphor of the body is pressed and strained to bear out the requirements of the sacerdotal conception of the Christian ministry. Just as the natural organs are necessary, because only through them can the specific functions of the body which they exercise be

[1] *Vide* p. 87, twelfth edition.

exercised at all; so it is argued the clergy are indispensable, though truly all Christians are "priests"; and apart from the clergy there can be no valid sacrament. But it is ever dangerous to argue from metaphors, and in this case more than ever dangerous, for the stoic metaphor of the body was elaborated by S. PAUL for another purpose than that of proving an exclusive right of the ordained clergy. The key to the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is the thirteenth. The apostle draws his picture of the body with many diverse functions, many aspects and degrees of service and comeliness, but with one life stirring through every organ, and one head directing every movement, not in order to establish the exclusive claims of a ministry, but in order to lead the Corinthians to the grand conclusion of that "more excellent way" of love, which every form of selfish individualism transgresses and ignores. In the latest version of the exclusive theory, as in the cruder earlier version, we are brought to the same ruinous consequence, viz., that a secondary factor of the Christian religion is exalted into the front rank of importance. The grace of the Christian covenant is made to depend on the specific form of order which the Church has accepted. In the words of an eminent living bishop, the argument compels the conclusion that "a ministry not episcopally received is invalid, that is to say, falls outside the conditions of covenanted security, and cannot justify its existence in terms of the covenant."[1]

A fortnight ago the general assembly of the Church of Scotland was, according to custom, brought to a

[1] *Vide* Gore, "Church and Ministry," p. 345.

close by an important address from the moderator. In that address Dr. MARSHALL reviewed the prospects of reunion among Christians; and with respect to this doctrine of the necessity of episcopal government he spoke with just decisiveness :—

"It is, I think, generally felt that so long as this claim is put forth in the name of the Anglican Church, any question of union with it is a practical impossibility. The almost universal feeling among us is that nothing can be done to draw nearer the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches till that claim is either abandoned or greatly modified."

The moderator proceeded to speak of the forthcoming Pan-Anglican Congress, and to offer for the assistance of the Anglican authorities a statement of the views which a representative Presbyterian must needs take of the question of reunion :—

"I think we are entitled to ask the Anglican Church very seriously to consider (if the claims to which I have referred are to be seriously pressed upon the Church of Scotland) what that Church would be called upon to do. It would be called upon, if I rightly understand the claims of many Anglicans, practically to admit that it is not now, or may not now be, has never been, or may never have been, a true Church; that its ministers have taught, and ruled, and administered the sacraments, without proper authority, and that it has been, consciously or unconsciously, in a state of schism from the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. It would also have to face this fact, that in the event of a union taking place, either all its ministers, or at any rate those of them who might be called to rule in the united Church, would have, practically, to disown their ordination and accept the ordination of a prelate. I put on one side all questions of the ordering of public worship, as I imagine that these could be adjusted with comparatively little difficulty; and questions of doctrine, for I believe the doctrine of the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches to be practically identical."

Of course we shall all agree that, if vital truth be at stake, then no gravity of consequences can be allowed

to release us from the obligation to stand firmly to it. If the exclusive validity of an episcopal ministry be part of Christ's revelation of truth, then at all hazards we must assert it, and endure whatever results shall follow. Yet, surely, we shall all allow that nothing short of vital truth could justify such an insistence on episcopacy, and that, if inwardly persuaded, as many, I believe most, English churchmen are, that episcopacy, although possibly the best, is not the only form of legitimate church order, we yet allow ourselves to acquiesce in the intolerant attitude, which is now fashionable in Anglican circles, we shall be grievously guilty. Can we as a church rightly continue to place the "historic episcopate" on the same level of importance as the scripture, the sacraments, and the catholic creeds? On the answer to that question everything really at this juncture depends. My whole purpose in preaching to-night is to persuade every churchman, as well clergyman as layman, resolutely and honestly to answer it for himself, and then to bring his personal influence to bear on the general policy of the Anglican Church as a whole.

The great congress which will enter on its sessions this week has included in its programme the discussion of Anglican relations to other Christian bodies; and the subject has been dealt with in a series of the "Pan-Anglican Papers," issued in advance of the discussions to inform and prepare the members. I have studied with much attention this series of papers, as well because the subject treated appears to me of extreme and critical importance, as because I supposed that the writers had been selected for their task as being

competent and representative churchmen. They belong to all branches of the Anglican communion, and illustrate the Anglican attitude towards other Christians in every part of the world. I desire to draw your particular attention to the emphasis which almost all of them place on the episcopal ministry, an emphasis which I must needs think is excessive and unwarrantable and full of ill promise. Here are a few examples. Let us begin with India.

Of the Syrian, Armenian, and Greek Churches in India the examining chaplain of the bishop of Calcutta tells us that they "furnish an object-lesson of the notes of true catholicity," and adds that "there is nothing to prevent friendly intercourse between these bodies and Anglicans."[1] When the same authority has to speak of the non-episcopalian churches at work in India, his tone is strangely different. "Though," he says, "the political and other reasons, which make these bodies stand aloof from the Anglican communion in the home lands, do not exist in India, yet there seems to be no reasonable hope that church fellowship between them and Anglicans can be effected in this country." He tells us frankly that the "total following" of the Anglican Church in India "is about a ninth of the whole Christian population"; he dilates with pathetic earnestness on the evils of the existing divisions, and admits that the principal bar to unity is the insistence on episcopal ordination as an essential factor of church life. "It would," he says, "be no easy matter for bodies of Indian Christians, some of which

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper S.F. (b) by the Rev. A. N. Banergii, B.A., Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Calcutta.

are large in certain districts, and several of which have acquired stability and strength, to accept this condition, as it would practically admit the invalidity of their ministry." Episcopacy is, however, to this writer so certainly part of the divine constitution of the Church that he appears unconscious of the burdens he is laying both on the reason and on the conscience of English churchmen. Given episcopacy, and no superstition is too gross, no discipline is too lax to disqualify a church for the fullest recognition; wanting episcopacy, no church, however apostolic in labour, or rich in spiritual gifts, can be recognized!

Pass from the east to the west; from churches which are wrestling with the urgent problems of missionary work among non-Christian populations to churches which are mainly pastoral and belong to our own kith and kin. In America the lay deputy of the diocese of Missouri tells us,[1] "We Anglicans are a feeble folk," and adds that "whole sections of our less well populated States have not so much as heard whether there be an 'Episcopal Church'." In such circumstances it might have been supposed that a humbler note would have been audible in the suggestions which this writer had to offer on the subject of Anglican relations with "separated bodies." The case is, indeed, different. We are assured "that there is less and less possibility of reunion with our separated brethren as 'churches,'" that these "separated brethren" have "erred and are deceived by false prophets," that, if only Anglicans will stand firm and make no concessions

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. II. (c) and (d) by Henry Leverett Chase, Lay Deputy of the Diocese of Missouri, U.S.A.

whatever, "our separated brothers" will rally to the Anglican Church "as the appointed organ of God's grace to a regenerated world." Truly, I am ashamed to inflict on you such utterances, and I would not do so were it not that they are the utterances of those who have been deliberately selected as representative Anglicans, capable of informing and guiding the judgment of their fellow churchmen. Extravagant as the language of the lay deputy of the diocese of Missouri undoubtedly is, it cannot fairly be said to be substantially at variance with the general tenour of the Pan-Anglican papers on the subject of relations with non-Anglican bodies. "Dissent, here," writes an Australian clergyman, "as in the old country, means not separation from an established or prescribed form of religion, but from the Catholic Church." Yet the same writer candidly admits both the monstrous evils of existing divisions and the grave defects of the Anglican system. Another Australian writer, the principal of the Theological School at Brisbane,[1] is nervously anxious lest there should be any weakening of the Anglican insistence on the necessity of episcopacy. "It is," he says, "of the most vital importance that the natural desire for reunion and comprehension should not over-balance the tenacity with which we cling to the historic episcopate as the golden key to Christian unity. There is a danger that non-conforming bodies might be willing to accept episcopal ordination in the future as a compromise instead of as a principle." The South African repre-

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper S.F. I. (d), by the Rev. Canon Tomlin, principal of the Theological School, Brisbane, Australia

sentatives in this melancholy symposium write in the same key of exalted and exclusive episcopalianism. The Bishop of Lebombo, for instance, does not scruple to describe all non-episcopalian ministers as "exceptionally holy laymen, who (in many cases through no fault of their own) have been prevented from being confirmed."[1]

In China the question of reunion among Protestant Christians has been actively discussed, and there are many indications that a satisfactory answer will be found. "The things at stake are so important," writes Bishop GRAVES,[2] "that nothing which is not of the very life of the Church ought to keep us separate from our brethren." He tells us most significantly that "the feelings of the converts are overwhelmingly for union with Christians of their own race." There appears to be little difficulty in reaching a working agreement on the great matters of faith, of morals, of the sacraments; but on the matter of the episcopate there is no agreement and no hope of agreement. "The historic episcopate," says the bishop, "would certainly not be accepted." At the great centenary conference at Shanghai "it was sufficiently evident that in the opinion of most of its members the historic episcopate was not even considered as a possible form for the future Chinese Church."

Thus it is confessedly the case that in every part of the Anglican communion the same fact is emerging into

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper S.D. 4 (a), by the Bishop of Lebombo.

[2] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper S.D. 4 (f), by Bishop F. R. Graves, of China.

prominence. Insistence on episcopacy as essential to the Christian Church is becoming the note of Anglicanism, and is rendering hopeless that reunion of Christians for which the Anglican Church constantly professes to be labouring.

We must not suppose that the exclusive theory remains theory without affecting practice, or comfort ourselves with the notion that the logic of facts will surely rectify the false logic of the seminaries. Here is a frank statement by a South African clergyman, who has been a missionary for nearly forty years, and now directs the work of some five-and-twenty persons.[1]

"The Bechwana were first evangelized eighty years ago by the worthy labours of the London Missionary and the Wesleyan Societies. We Anglo-Catholics have come into the field far too late. Yet we have to teach that there is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that schism from it is as great a sin as adultery or lying. The appearances are dead against us. We are surrounded by these large, well-organized missions—efficiently manned, provided with ample means—whilst we are few in number, and weak, and poor; yet we claim to be the one Church of Christ, whilst they are only human institutions. This is obviously a strain upon our teachers, who hear on every hand of 'The Wesleyan Church,' 'The London Church,' 'The Lutheran Church,' and so on; these being the old-established Christian bodies, while we are people of yesterday. Yet if we accepted the position of merely another sect, varying from the rest merely by wearing white linen clothes in preaching instead of black ones, the first retort, 'Why do you intrude among these old churches?' would be obvious. The strong and persevering maintenance of our catholic position is the only justification for our being here at all; and the catechists must constantly be kept up to the mark in this respect."

Can any considering man doubt that so long as the attitude thus frankly confessed is maintained abroad,

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper 5 (e), by Canon W. H. R. Bevan, Bloemfontein.

and left unrebuked at home, there is no reasonable prospect of improving the relations between the Anglican communion and the other branches of reformed Christianity? Can any charitable man fail to perceive in that attitude the appropriate external expression of the very spirit of loveless self-assertion which Christ condemned in its first appearance, when He said to the intolerant son of Zebedee respecting that believer who cast out devils in the Master's name, but who followed not with the Apostles: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." "The English churchman," writes Dr. MASON truly enough, "stands alone in the world. He is in communion with no one else, in east or west. . . . Our isolation is complete. Is it our fault? and if so, what can we do to amend it?"[1] He attempts to answer this grave and inevitable question, and what is his answer? He would leave Rome alone for the present. The Eastern churches, though "theoretically they do not acknowledge so much as the validity of our baptism," might immediately enter on terms of intercommunion with us "if only the English Church, for her part, is vigilant to maintain her own discipline, and to secure loyalty to her own doctrine." So far the spirit of a large charity seems to prevail; but as soon as the learned canon passes out of the charmed circle of episcopacy, his tone hardens, and he is as hopeless as the rest. "The cleavage between the principles of English dissent and our own is so great that it hardly appears to be a

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Paper S.F. II. (g), by the Rev. A. J. Mason, D.D., Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and Canon of Canterbury.

matter of practical politics to approach them at once, officially, with a view to union. . . . The fundamental conceptions of the Christian religion entertained by churchmen and by English dissenters in general are so far apart that it is useless to formulate conditions of reunion with them." He has nothing more hopeful to say with respect to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He concludes, therefore, that we had best "make our first approaches to those bodies of Christians who are agreed in principle with us, if any such are to be found, and not with those who are in principle opposed." He recognizes three groups of Christians as thus in principle agreed with English churchmen. These are the "Old Catholics"; the Lutheran Churches of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, which, though destitute of a true apostolic succession, have preserved "the episcopal principle"; and the Moravians, who have an episcopate which had its origin in Presbyterian ordinations. So enamoured is this writer of the mere name of episcopacy that he would even add "the large and flourishing community of the Episcopal Methodists." While thus he makes all turn on the episcopate, he is aware of doubts as to the validity of the English succession, and suggests that one happy consequence of the policy he adumbrates would be the rectifying all defects, real or imaginary, of Anglican ordinations by the aid of the undoubtedly valid ministry of the Old Catholic bishops!

Take another example, perhaps even more impressive. The bishop of Gibraltar[1] says of the Anglican Com-

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Papers, No. 6, "The Anglican Communion," by the Bishop of Gibraltar.

munion that "it is the one great ecclesiastical force which yields to facts," and which, "though tenacious of the past," is "yet capable in an unlimited degree of adapting itself to new conditions." None the less, the bishop can write a careful paper on the Anglican communion, in which he finds space to name with scrupulous deference the Roman Catholics, the Greeks, the Old Catholics, the Armenians, the Russians, and yet avoids all mention of the non-episcopalian churches save for one disrespectful allusion to "separated bodies." Does this invidious distinction, this eloquent silence, argue much "yielding to facts"? Why must the reformed national Churches of Scotland and the Continent, and the powerful "free Churches" of England and America be exiles from a courtesy which can take thought for the ecclesiastical claims and prejudices of Armenians and Old Catholics? Have non-episcopalians no feelings as well as no rights?

The Anglican communion, we are repeatedly assured, is "a federation of national churches."[1] Of these there are said to be no less than nine or ten, each completely organized on the Catholic model. The "national Church," however, is to be understood in every case as consisting only of those who are in communion with the Anglican episcopate. In Scotland and in America these form but a fraction of the Christians; yet they are to be credited with all the attributes of nationality, and exclusively reckoned with. Is this a procedure which will minister to a better feeling between the separated

[1] *E.g.*, by the Bishop of Bombay in Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. 3 (p), and by the Rev. F. W. Puller, of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, in Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. III. (d).

churches of Christendom? Can it be justified at the bar of reason, or of charity, or even of policy? Of what use is it to speak of reunion to the Scot, proud, and justly proud, of his national Church, when you begin by assuming that that national Church is a misnomer and a sham? Is there not an element of actual absurdity in speaking of a "great national Church, such as the Church of the United States,"[1] when all you have in your mind is a small denomination, which is hardly known by name to great multitudes of American Christians? Nothing can be more certain than that this notion of "national Churches" is quite novel in the experience of the Church of England. To this day the Bidding Prayer, as it stands in the canons of 1604, includes a petition for the Church of Scotland, which then, as now, was presbyterian in polity. Every student of the Reformation knows that the Church of England recognized to the full the national character of the other reformed churches. At the Synod of Dort, in 1618, the representatives of the Church of England sate along with the representatives of other reformed churches, and did not think that the "imparity of ministers," which marked their church, involved any breach of fellowship. The attribution to a small denomination of that national character which manifestly must belong to the whole multitude of Christian folk, is not less absurd than hurtful.

It would not be right for me, of course, to ignore the wiser and more charitable language of some, though, alas! but very few, of the writers of these "Pan-Anglican

[1] The phrase is Mr. Puller's, *vide* Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. III. (d).

Papers." Thus the Dean of Westminster—if I understand his words[1]—separates himself decisively from the extreme episcopalianism, of which I have given you some examples. "It can hardly be doubted that any serious effort towards the reinforcement of the Anglican communion from the numbers of those who naturally should belong to it must not take the form of proselytism of individuals, but must primarily be concerned with those communities which stand nearest to it in point of doctrine, and which, apart from questions of ecclesiastical order, hold a position scarcely distinguishable from that of the evangelical school of churchmen." And Canon ROBINSON,[2] whom large knowledge of missionary questions renders a particularly weighty witness, testifies to the practical folly of multiplying bishoprics at great cost when evangelistic work is actually being abandoned for lack of funds. He justly protests against the proposal to establish a new bishopric in Manchuria, where "there is at present no missionary work in connection with the Anglican Church, though extensive and encouraging work is being carried on at many different centres throughout the province by the Scotch Presbyterians, the Irish Presbyterians, and by a Danish mission." The principal of Holy Trinity Divinity College at Osaka pleads boldly for "a frank recognition of the position of the free churches,"[3] and argues with great force from their admitted

[1] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. I. (a).

[2] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Papers S.D. 4 (n), by Canon Robinson, editor of "East and West."

[3] *Vide* Pan-Anglican Papers S.F. II. (a), by the Rev. G. Chapman, C.M.S. Missionary, Principal of Holy Trinity Divinity College, Osaka.

spiritual success to their adequate divine authorization. These writers, however, are exceptional: the general tenour of the "Pan-Anglican Papers" is in the narrowest sense of the word episcopalian.

I plead for a return to the older attitude of English churchmen, an attitude, which the learning of our time and the experience of centuries has justified. I plead that the specific form of Church organization shall again, as in the days of the apostles and in the early Church, vary with local conditions, and yet that the fraternity of all Christians shall not be impaired. I plead for the frank recognition of those non-episcopalian churches which can agree with us in the essentials of faith and morality, and in the reverent use of the dominical sacraments. I plead for a humbler and more charitable Anglicanism, which will consent to learn, as well as aspire to teach, and can set the cause of Christ above the proud claims of the episcopate. "We preach not ourselves; but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake"—that was the formula of apostolic ministry; it is ill reflected in that waxing insistence on hierarchical claims, which is becoming the note of modern Anglicanism; nevertheless, it enshrines the very principle of faithful churchmanship. The world is weary of divine rights, disillusioned with the churches, bewildered and offended by their conflicts. Yet, never before did the human spirit confess more clearly its desire for Christ. Here at home, where society staggers beneath the accumulating weight of ancient wrongs and modern problems; abroad, in the wide reaches of empire where life is empty of hallowed memories, and the

fierce urgency of the material is unchastened and unshamed by the symbols of the spiritual; in the vast populations of Asia and Africa, where the familiar pilot stars of ancestral religion are fading from the sky, and no fresh illuminations come from the accustomed shrines, the necessity of Christ, and the demand, unconscious but increasingly urgent, for His Lordship are the burden of human prayer. Men everywhere are asking for the bread of life. We thrust before them the miserable spectacle of our ecclesiastical claims. In all this, we Anglicans seem to bear the heaviest burden of responsibility, for the very principle of division, which hinders the union of the churches, and diverts men's minds from the essentials of faith and life, is our exclusiveness.

If, indeed, we have persuaded ourselves that the episcopal government is essential, and that all non-episcopal ministries, in spite of the spiritual success with which the Holy Ghost has blessed, and is blessing, their labours, are invalid, then, I admit that there is no help for it; we must go on in this lamentable isolation, traverse the old futile cycle, and refuse fellowship with all the reformed churches. Only, in that case, let us cease to insult our brethren with proposals of reunion; let us spare the world that gratuitous hypocrisy.

If, however, the case be otherwise, and our informed and deliberate judgment accords with the irrepressible instincts of our hearts in repudiating this cruel and monstrous notion that non-episcopal churches are, for that reason, outside the covenant of the gospel, then, in the name of all things honest and charitable, let us

confess our convictions, let us press them on the bishops, let us insist on clearing out of the way that ancient and fatal barrier to Christian fellowship. Then truly a new element of hope would enter into our aspirations, and the mystic ties of spiritual fraternity might be able to assert themselves in all the churches, which own in sincerity the Lordship of Christ.

"No distance breaks the tie of blood,
Brothers are brothers evermore,
Nor wrong, nor wrath of deadliest mood
That magic may o'erpower;
Oft ere the common source be known,
The kindred drops will claim their own,
And throbbing pulses silently
Move heart towards heart by sympathy.

"So is it with true Christian hearts,
Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood;
Oh! might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife,
Lightening the load of daily life!"

VI

THE ORIGINAL GOSPEL[1]

BUT THERE WERE SOME OF THEM, MEN OF CYPRUS AND CYRENE, WHO, WHEN THEY WERE COME TO ANTIOCH, SPAKE UNTO THE GREEKS ALSO, PREACHING THE LORD JESUS.—ACTS xi. 20.

THE consequences of human action have little or no relation to the intentions and desires of the actors. This is one of the truisms of history, which may well chasten the arrogance of ambition and restrain the ardour of zeal. Nowhere indeed has it been more constantly and conspicuously illustrated than in the sphere of ecclesiastical history. Very early in the experience of Christians the famous aphorism was coined, which sums up with eloquent brevity a whole cycle of human delusion and disappointment, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Persecutors have generally missed their aim, because their violence provokes reactions in unexpected quarters, and stirs latent but unknown powers into activity. Nay, it is not too much to say that, in so far as the persecutor's object has been the advancement of true religion, and not merely the suppression of false religion, it has invariably failed. Persecution may

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 3rd Sunday after Trinity, July 5, 1908, being the day on which the Bishops assembled for the fifth Lambeth Conference received the Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey.

succeed, and I incline to think, often does succeed, in the task of suppression, but at that point its success is arrested. Yet the suppression of error is a small, perhaps even an insignificant, part of its consequences. Persecution works such mischief in its own agents, such waste of the finer elements of human character, such destruction, therefore, of the raw materials of religion, that the enfeeblement and lethargy which it induces more than outweigh all the advantages gained by the extinction of error. "Let both grow together until the harvest" was the divine householder's command to those impatient servants who would promptly and violently extirpate the tares on their first appearance in the wheat field; and the words have application to error as well as to erroneous persons. In the interest of the wheat you had best leave the tares alone, "lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them." In the interest of truth you had best be patient with error.

At the very beginning of Christian history we find the Church gaining greatly from persecution. The first result of "the tribulation that arose about Stephen" was a crisis which threatened to destroy the infant Church at a stroke. The society at Jerusalem was dispersed: the apostles, indeed, stood to their posts, but the most probable consequence of their heroism seemed to be their own early martyrdom. S. Luke, reviewing the crisis at a later period, is able to discern the actual course of events, and to point out the effect of the first persecution. It compelled Christians to understand their duty, and to interpret their gospel. On the one hand, the Church was forced

to engage in missionary labours; on the other hand, Christianity was forced to become catholic.

At first there was considerable danger that the disciples in Jerusalem should settle down to the decent and comparatively secure position of an estimable and pious sect. They were popular, and they deserved to be popular. "The people magnified them." Indeed, the popular feeling on their behalf was so plainly manifested that the persecuting section of the national hierarchy was almost awed into acquiescing in their existence. Their cardinal and distinguishing beliefs—that Jesus of Nazareth was Messiah, and that He had risen from the dead, and was soon to return in triumph to "give the kingdom to Israel"—were not in themselves unpalatable to Pharisaic ears, and at worst could be tolerated as harmless fantasies, so long as those who held them were scrupulous adherents of the Jewish ritual law, and conspicuous among religious people mainly by their unequalled benevolence. There was no slight risk that the Christian Church should insensibly accept the pleasant obscurity of a reformed sect of the reigning religion. Then came the sharp and sudden blow of persecution. Fanaticism ever disdains considerations of prudence and policy. The zeal of SAUL of Tarsus was as disinterested as it was ruthless, and it would not tolerate the existence of doctrines which, if true, convicted Judaism of criminal apostasy. Thus the Church was driven in spite of itself to be honest, to claim the independence which was its due, to repudiate the servitude of ignoble toleration, and to embrace the glorious risks of open and universal propagandism. Missionaries were coined out of exiles; motives were discovered

in necessities; the violence of the Jews poured out upon the world a whole army of Christian preachers. Nor was even this all.

A catholic propaganda implies a catholic gospel. The zealots of Jewish particularism become the foster-parents of Christian universalism. The creed must be worthy of the Church. Inevitably, therefore, the exiles who by force of circumstances had become missionaries were the first to solve the problem which so gravely perplexed the mother Church. They forced the hand of the apostles by boldly offering their message to all who would listen to it. "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they came to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."

So long as the Church was pent up in a sacred city, tied fast to the local traditions, forced to think and act in ancestral grooves, it could never rise to the height of its divine mission. It must move out, be thrust out violently — since nothing short of positive violence would avail to break through the manifold and subtle links which held it fast to the ancient and venerated birthplace — into the great modern world, be swept along by the fierce tides of popular life, be caught into the mingled mass of its conflicting interests, and so through stress and strife find its true measure, and discern its proper task. The first of the memorable crises of Christian history, and, perhaps, the most important, was that which coincided with the transference of the centre of ecclesiastical life from the old sacred capital, Jerusalem, to the great modern capital, Antioch. The difficulties which seemed almost insur-

mountable on the slopes of *Zion*, and in the porches of the temple, seemed too trivial for consideration in the broad thoroughfares of the Syrian metropolis, in presence of its vast and various population. We hear nothing of any hesitation or debate on the part of the arriving refugees from Jerusalem. Their course was plainly marked out for them; it came in the natural order of events that they should do what they did. "When they were come to Antioch, they spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." It is, perhaps, not a little remarkable that on the very threshold of Christian history, in the first great religious crisis, the decision was reached, not by the supreme ecclesiastical authorities, but by the rank and file of the Church; not in the mother Church but in the missionary field.

The original form of the catholic gospel is summed up in the suggestive and arresting phrase, "preaching the Lord Jesus." To the Jews the proclamation of the Messiah fitted itself on to the elaborate and ancient system, to which, indeed, it provided the true symmetrical climax and completion. Christ was to the converted Jews less a person than a providential fact: discipleship to the Master was merged in membership of the society. The national covenant still filled their thought; the notion of self-surrender in personal discipleship showed faintly on the horizon of Jewish Christianity. As soon, however, as the gospel had to be proclaimed to the Greeks, all this was changed. It fitted on to nothing patriotic in their minds; it confirmed and completed no sacred system; it illuminated no venerated scriptures. They were not distracted by

preconceptions slowly built into the fabric of their thinking by centuries of national experience; such preconceptions as they possessed were either plainly erroneous, and, as such, renounced as a matter of course when they accepted the new message, or quite general preconceptions learned from the philosophers or implicit in their ancestral religions, and easily congruous with that religion which is the sum of all truth. These preconceptions were either too vague to influence, or too fundamentally true to disturb their minds, when they were confronted with the gospel of Christ. How then should this new Jewish religion present itself to the Greeks? Through what door should it enter their hearts? How would it appeal to them? To such questions the answer must be found in the single fact which the text emphasizes—the spiritual power of the Lord Himself. The most successful of all the Christian missionaries who preached the gospel to the Greeks formed his evangelistic method in the school of experience, and expressed it thus: "I determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

The missionaries, of course, built on the foundation of the universal belief in God. They started with the assumptions of theism, and, on those assumptions, they offered to their hearers the living Christ as the true exponent of God, and the true representative of man. This intensely personal character of their preaching often comes into view in the narrative of the Acts. "The disciples," we are told, "were called Christians first in Antioch." The glib-tongued, quick-witted Antiochenes—the Parisians of the ancient world, as someone has called them not inaptly

—were not slow to coin a suitable nick-name for the preachers and their followers; and they naturally laid hold of the most prominent feature in their preaching. These Jews were for ever speaking of Christ, praising Christ, offering Christ. Therefore they should best be distinguished by His Name. They were Christ's folk, Christians. In its original intention, probably, the famous name was contemptuous, but it was welcomed by those to whom it was given. They boasted of it: delighted in it: read new meanings into it: passed it on to be the most illustrious name of human history. "If a man suffer as a Christian," writes S. PETER, "let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God in this name."

The person of Christ is that element of Christianity which is neither temporal, nor local, nor transitory: and other elements only come to have a certain permanence as they are able to vindicate a relationship with that. Ecclesiastical systems, dogmatic systems, are growths, conditioned in their growing by the circumstances, external and internal, which condition all terrestrial development. They have a relative worth, a relative authority, a relative truth; but they fail and pass as the conditions of existence change, and they who stake their faith on them, and twine about them the deep loyalties of their hearts, are predestined to infinite disappointment. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said our Lord, and He added that His words should not pass away. The long story of Christianity confirms and interprets His speech. Everything has changed; men's notion of social order has changed, and their habits of living, and their modes of thought, and their

standards of conduct, and their ideals, and their codes of honour, and their systems of belief, and their organizations of worship and discipline: we live in a world of extinct beliefs and perishing traditions; we are girdled with the wreckage of the centuries. Here alone is the unchanging fact which gives coherence and continuity to the dissolving scene; here is the rock, on which our feet may find firm treading; here is the unity which gathers into itself all the ages, and vindicates even for the remotest past fellowship with the most distant future. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever." Here is the principle of the Church's continuous life. He, the unchanging, is in her. She moves under ever-changing fortunes along the path of her eternal mission under the ægis of His presence. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Here is the spring of her unfailing hope. In dark hours of seeming defeat, in the shade of bitter injustice, under the burden of cruel oppression, here is the hidden source of her courage; here is the fountain of her indestructible energy: "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge."

These reflections cannot be unsuitable to-day, when the bishops of the Anglican communion gathered from far and near are inaugurating their fifth decennial conference by a solemn service in our great Abbey.

It is, of course, the case, and I apprehend that we must not allow ourselves to forget it, that the 250 bishops represent but a small part of the English Church, and a far smaller part of the Church Catholic. Nevertheless, there are reasons why an importance attaches to the action of the forthcoming conference, which is out of all proportion to the numbers of Christians who are, in some sense, represented in it. The Church of England is the mother church of English Christians, whatever their denominational description may be; and, whatever may have been her faults in the past, or her failures in the present, nothing can take from her the historic splendour of that fact. There is a natural fitness in her leadership which commends it to the acceptance of the other English-speaking churches, and adds a special significance to the proposals which she addresses to them. With the advantages of this natural primacy go also the dangers. The mother church of English Christianity is tempted to rest in the memories of her illustrious past, to exalt unduly the time-honoured traditions which she has received, to close her ears to the latest voices of divine direction, and to shut her eyes to the new revelations of God in human life. I do not think it possible for any considering churchman to miss the waxing insistence on organization, the magnifying of externals, the strengthening emphasis of non-essentials, which mark current Anglicanism. Read the ecclesiastical newspapers, and mark the exultation with which the rapidly-increasing number of bishops is described, and the demand openly urged that this conference should retake those powers of spiritual legislation which the

synods of antiquity possessed. For my part, I find little comfort in the statistics of an extending organization, for it is not by the scale of its hierarchy that the spiritual efficiency of any church may be measured. Nor, as I am able to perceive the truth, is popularity a sign of spiritual health. On the contrary, churches sink in order to become popular, lowering their theological standard to the level of the general superstition, and bending their moral code to the service of prevailing political demands.

The mediæval Church of England on the eve of the Reformation was a popular church. All over the country evidence exists to show the strength of the position which that church held in the affections of the people. Church building was proceeding, organizations were multiplying up to the last. This fabric, in which we are worshipping, is an evidence of this. It was built by the parishioners at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and was consecrated as late as the year 1523, only six years before the Long Parliament of the Reformation began its memorable career. Why did that powerful, wealthy, popular Church of mediæval England fall with such dramatic suddenness? Was it not because it failed to read "the signs of the times," refused to recognize the leading of God in the present, shut its eyes to the new knowledge of the time, refused to learn and to unlearn anything? That spurious loyalty of an unreasoning and unimaginative conservatism is the bane of old institutions, most of all of old churches. The hardest of all achievements is the surrender of an untenable claim. The Papacy was called upon to make that surrender in the sixteenth

century, and it failed to respond. It preferred to follow the easier line of self-assertion, and went forward with the enthusiastic applause of its devoted adherents to a failure, the full measure of which is only beginning to be visible. If I mistake not, the Anglican Church is called upon now to made a similar surrender, to lower its denominational claim, to enlarge its charity, to abate its pride, to "lose its life that it may gain it." Our prayer for these bishops at Lambeth will be the prayer that they may be given grace of denominational self-suppression, that is, the power of a true spiritual perspective, the insight which distinguishes between the essentials and the non-essentials of religion, which recognizes the truth even in novel and unwelcome forms, and rises to obey the truth it sees. For the preservation of religion at home, for the bringing to non-Christians abroad the life-giving message of the gospel, we need the united efforts of all true Christians. Nothing less can suffice for so great a task as we are called to. And how can that working harmony of Christians be attained without great surrenders of preference, of prejudice, of interest, of everything which is not vital? Only when we have raised again into its true central prominence that first and final creed of the Church, which underlies all Christian beliefs, and is the postulate of every discipleship, "Jesus is Lord," can we draw the separated followers of Christ together.

And where shall we better learn that creed than here in the great sacrament, wherein the Lord draws nigh to His own? Here, at least, where we plead before the throne of God the eternal sacrifice once for all made upon the cross, He must fill our vision.

"For all Thy Church, O Lord, we intercede;
Make Thou our sad divisions soon to cease;
Draw us the nearer each to each, we plead,
By drawing all to Thee, O Prince of Peace;
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
By this blest Sacrament of Unity."

Yes, in His presence all that divides must recede, all that unites must advance. Self must fall back, conceal itself, wholly pass. Christ alone must fill our hearts.

For the secret conflicts of our own souls, for the great passion of the Church militant throughout the world, for the special trial of the Church of England, for the blessed dead, who sleep in Christ, we lift our voice in prayer to-day:

"O Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace."

VII

S. CYPRIAN[1]

AND JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, MASTER, WE SAW ONE CASTING OUT DEVILS IN THY NAME; AND WE FORBADE HIM, BECAUSE HE FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US. BUT JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, FORBID HIM NOT: FOR HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST YOU IS FOR YOU.
S. LUKE ix. 49, 50.

BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YE ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.—S. JOHN xiii. 35.

1. WHEN the Puritans at the Savoy Conference requested that the "black letter" saints should be removed from the calendar, the bishops replied that they were placed there not for formal commemoration, but for the preservation of their memories, and for the convenience of the public, since they were much used for fixing leases, law days, etc. This rather odd mixture of sentiment and common sense may explain the selection of the names, which could hardly be justified on any coherent or religious theory. The list includes the greater Latin fathers, but omits the Greeks altogether. Patriotic motives might authorise the retention of the national saints, and historical considerations might suffice to defend the inclusion of some others; but nearly half the names can offer neither of these pleas. They could only have been justified by the public

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 16th Sunday after Trinity, September 26, 1909 (S. Cyprian's Day).

convenience, which is no longer concerned with them. At present their interest is purely antiquarian. The 26th of September is marked in the calendar with the name of S. CYPRIAN, archbishop and martyr. The date of this saint's martyrdom was September 14, but he seems to have been confused with another CYPRIAN, who is commemorated in the Roman calendar on September 26.[1] Few saints have greater claim to be remembered than he, whether his personal character, or his public achievements, or his posthumous influence, be considered. In all these respects S. CYPRIAN must be reckoned one of the most eminent Christians that have ever lived.

2. It would not, perhaps, be excessive to say that of all the ancient Fathers only S. CHRYSOSTOM has enjoyed such wide popularity among English churchmen. The reasons for popularity in the case of these two saints have indeed been widely different. The "golden-mouth" preacher of Antioch has appealed to our veneration for the Scriptures, our admiration of preaching, our special fondness for practical homiletics. None of the ancients is so interesting, or so evangelical, or so relevant to modern needs. S. CHRYSOSTOM has a truly Pauline insight into human nature, and his homilies are not unworthy a place alongside of the epistles to the Corinthians.

S. CYPRIAN owes his vogue mainly to the doctrine which he taught, and the controversies in which he was engaged. He formulated the "sacerdotal" conception of the ministry, and stood forth as the champion

[1] *Vide* Archbishop Benson's "Cyprian," p. 610 f. "S. Cyprian's Day in Kalendars."

of the episcopate against the Papacy. In the history of religious controversy his writings have played a great part. Probably hardly any primitive documents have been more often quoted; none have been more drastically treated. The interpolations of the text of CYPRIAN by the Roman controversialists might almost be called the classical illustration of polemical immorality. It would be easy to accumulate testimonies to the critical importance of the career of this saint. Archbishop BENSON, who devoted the scanty leisure of his arduous life to a learned study of S. CYPRIAN, which insensibly passed from a critical review into a whole-hearted eulogy, asserts that in the sphere of ecclesiastical organization "the magnitude of the effect he produced is incomparably greater than that of any other person, not excepting HILDEBRAND."[1] Bishop LIGHTFOOT said that "CYPRIAN crowned the edifice of episcopal power," and was "the first to put forward without relief or disguise sacerdotal assumptions," which before his time had been either unknown or unexpressed; that "so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them, that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."[2] Another eminent Anglican authority, the late Professor BIGG, inclines to dissent from the view that CYPRIAN originated his sacerdotal doctrine, and maintains that "what is characteristic of CYPRIAN is merely the zeal with which he spurs his theory."[3] Bishop GORE takes the same ground. CYPRIAN, he says, "did not in fact

[1] *Vide* "Dictionary of Christian Biography," art. "Cyprian."
[2] *Vide* "Philippians," pp. 258—9.
[3] *Vide* "The Origins of Christianity," p. 364.

create or innovate, but he gave emphatic expression to an existing church principle in view of the particular circumstances of his episcopate."[1] "He stands out in church history as the typical bishop, and with his weighty sentences he impressed on the episcopal theory an abiding form."[2] Non-Anglicans have been not less emphatic, if naturally less appreciative. CYPRIAN, according to HARNACK, "transformed the idea of the Church";[3] "exalted the unity of the organization of the Church above the unity of the doctrine of faith";[4] "was the first to proclaim the identity of heretics and schismatics, by making a man's Christianity depend on his belonging to the great episcopal church confederation";[5] taught "a new conception of the Church which was a necessary outcome of existing circumstances and which was the first thing that gave a fundamental religious significance to the separation of clergy and laity."[6] Principal LINDSAY emphasizes the influence of CYPRIAN's legal training on his doctrine of "apostolic succession." "Apostolic succession," he says, "in the dogmatic sense of that ambiguous term, is the legal fiction required by the legal mind to connect the growing conceptions of the authority of the clergy with the earlier days of Christianity. . . . The formal, legal Roman mind needed a precedent in the shape of this legal fiction for the unwonted domination

[1] *Vide* "The Church and the Ministry," pp. 164—5.
[2] *Vide ibid.*, p. 169.
[3] *Vide* "History of Dogma," p. 71.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

which the chief pastors were beginning to claim."[1] GIBBON connects CYPRIAN with the rapid development of episcopal authority which marked the third century, and characteristically describes him as a specimen of those "active prelates who could reconcile the arts of the most ambitious statesman with the Christian virtues which seemed adapted to the character of a saint and martyr."[2]

3. These authorities will suffice to indicate the critical importance of S. CYPRIAN'S career, and the nature of his influence in succeeding ages. It will be worth while to glance at the famous little treatise "On the Unity of the Church," in which his doctrine is clearly and shortly set forth. It has been described as "in the main a fierce rhetorical tirade against the sin of schism,"[3] and such it is; but it is also a vigorous statement of a theory, which dominated the writer's mind, and we must add, which lays its malefic spell on many Christians still. It is mere justice to remember that this tract was an "emergency document," struck out in the heat of a serious crisis. This circumstance, however, has nowise diminished its effect in later times, and cannot of course affect the truth or falsehood of the theory which it propounds. Archbishop BENSON assigns the treatise to the year 251, and thinks that it was read to the council which assembled in Carthage in the course of that year.[4] CYPRIAN had just returned

[1] *Vide* "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," pp. 279, 282.
[2] *Vide* "Decline and Fall," ed. Bury, ii. 44.
[3] *Vide* Bigg, l.c., p. 371.
[4] *Vide* "Cyprian," p. 180.

to his diocese after the short and sharp persecution of DECIUS, and he found himself confronted by a very serious crisis. How were the numerous lapsed Christians to be dealt with? NOVATIAN was appealing to the stern enthusiasm which had been generated in many minds by the "fiery trial" of persecution, and threatening to break up the unity of the Church if a way of repentance were provided for those who had fallen before the temptation. There was much excuse for excitement and exaggeration, but these have survived their extenuations, and stamped CYPRIAN's treatise with a harshness which cannot be defended.

He assumes, perhaps inevitably, the Christian reference of Mosaic laws, identifies his own opinion with the truth which it is sinful to abandon, postulates the divine institution of the episcopate, and then makes the postulate the basis of his argument. He is fond of metaphors, and reasons from them freely; finally he is carried by the vehemence of his feeling and the flow of his rhetoric into statements which are even shocking. "He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother. If any one could escape who was outside the ark of NOAH, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church. . . . Let none think that the good can depart from the Church. The wind does not carry away the wheat, nor does the hurricane uproot the tree that is based on a solid root. . . . Do they deem that they have Christ with them when they are collected together, who are gathered together outside the Church of Christ? Even if such men were slain in confession of the Name, that stain is not even washed away by blood: the

inexpiable and grave fault of discord is not even purged by suffering. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church. . . . They cannot dwell with God who would not be of one mind in God's Church. Although they burn, given up to flames and fires, or lay down their lives, thrown to the wild beasts, that will not be the crown of faith, but the punishment of perfidy; nor will it be the glorious ending of religious valour, but the destruction of despair. Such an one may be slain; crowned he cannot be. . . . Does he think that he has Christ, who acts in opposition to Christ's priests, who separates himself from the company of His clergy and people? He bears arms against the Church, he contends against God's appointment. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against Christ's sacrifice, for the faith faithless, for religion profane, a disobedient servant, an impious son, a hostile brother, despising the bishops, and forsaking God's priests, he dares to set up another altar, to make another prayer with unauthorized words, to profane the truth of the Lord's offering by false sacrifices, and not to know that he who strives against the appointment of God, is punished on account of the daring of his temerity by Divine visitation." Then the history of KORAH, DATHAN and ABIRAM is quoted as an example of the divine judgment on schismatics. This shocking doctrine finds expression in other writings of CYPRIAN. Thus in one of his letters, he says that obedience to the bishops is indispensable to salvation. "For outside the Church they cannot live, inasmuch as the house of God is one, and no one can be safe but in the Church."

Such language, of course, is capable of a tolerable

sense. If by the Church you mean "the whole company of faithful people dispersed throughout the whole world," then you may speak in as as absolute terms as you will about the importance of membership; but CYPRIAN categorically limited his definition of the Church of Christ to the community governed by the bishops, and refused to contemplate any wider sense. It is true that he insisted with fervour, and doubtless with sincerity, on the cardinal importance of love and righteousness, and he was right in saying that schismatic action implied the loss of both; but he assumed that love and righteousness belonged only to his episcopal church, and denounced every separation as schismatical. Carried on by his polemical ardour he actually maintained that episcopal authority depended for its validity on the personal goodness of the individual bishop, and thus unwittingly became the conspicuous patron of the very principle of schismatic puritanism. This development of his theory, however, has been tacitly abandoned within the Church, and few of those who quote the language of CYPRIAN in the cause of episcopacy care to remember this part of his teaching.

4. CYPRIAN, I have said, was one of the most eminent Christians that have ever lived, and I have pleaded that fact as my apology for bringing his career before you this afternoon. In the controversy with the followers of NOVATIAN, he was standing for the truly evangelical attribute of mercy, and his writings, in spite of their terrible theory, are everywhere suffused with pastoral tenderness. "Of his greatest gifts the greatest was his charity," writes Archbishop BENSON, following the earlier judgment of S. AUGUSTINE. The

great controversialist of the fourth century, who stands in the annals of the Church as the apologist of Christian persecution, realized his spiritual kinship with the great controversialist of the third century, who stands in the record as the champion of episcopalianism. "Praise be to God!" he writes, with respect to CYPRIAN, "who made this man what he was, to set forth before His Church . . . the worthlessness of the charity of any Christian, who would not keep the unity of Christ." Identify "the unity of Christ" with membership of the episcopal church, and you have the Cyprianic doctrine justly described, and its fatal falsehood revealed. The union of personal goodness and false teaching, of personal charity and cruel intolerance, of love and bigotry, is unhappily familiar. Of the cruellest persecutors it is no uncommon thing to read that they were themselves conspicuous for acts of charity. In the third century the full possibilities of the contradiction were as yet veiled, but in the twentieth they may be read in the blood-stained annals of Christian bigotry which span the interval. HARNACK allows himself to make a stern comment on the paradox as we meet it now:—

"The appeal which Catholicism makes to love, even at the present day, in order to justify its secularised and tyrannical Church, turns in the mouth of hierarchical politicians into hypocrisy, of which one would like to acquit a man of CYPRIAN'S stamp."[1]

"Judge not that ye be not judged" said our Lord, and we may not forget His words even in presence of this immense perversion of His gospel, which has made

[1] "History of Dogma," ii. 86, note.

possible the language of love and the policy of persecution; but we must take account of the possibilities of self-delusion which are latent in our nature, and mark the blinding influences of false theory and party zeal. The very fact that CYPRIAN and AUGUSTINE were genuinely good men adds to the significance of the warnings which their careers disclose.

5. There is special reason why the moral of S. CYPRIAN'S career should be pressed on the attention of English churchmen. Of the reformed churches the Church of England in the process of reformation made the least violent breach with the system of the mediæval Church. That there was great advantage in this circumstance cannot be seriously questioned, for the shadow of all reformations is precisely the violence of the breaches which they necessitate with the past. It will not be excessive to say that English churchmen are the envy of the Protestant world for their liturgical heritage. The Prayer Book has no adequate parallel in any other reformed church. But with these advantages there have certainly gone special perils. So long as the terror of the great crisis lay on the Anglican mind, there was no risk that the true meaning of reformation should be obscured, but when time had softened the shock of conflict, and the very completeness of success had obscured the magnitude of the old dangers, then some of the former mischiefs began to lift their heads again, and the former errors to grow from the old roots. If we inquire what was the essential character of the Reformation, we shall not be far wrong if we answer that it was the definite repudiation of the Cyprianic conception of the Church. The Reformers revolted

against the notion that the primary and vital obligation of discipleship, with which was bound up the very right of a Christian man to claim the promises of God in the Gospel, was obedience to the external authority of the episcopate. That authority had in the process of time, and by a true inevitable development, become vested in the Pope, as supreme head of the bishops; but this circumstance in no degree altered its character. "A one-man theory of the local church could hardly fail to suggest a one-man theory of the Church universal," and it is one of the ironies of history that CYPRIAN, who has passed as the champion of the episcopate against the Papacy, was in point of fact the individual who, more than any other, may be said to have carried the papal principle into the Christian Church. It is, of course, easy enough to demonstrate that S. CYPRIAN did not hold the modern Roman doctrine of papal infallibility, but it is not less easy to show that the doctrine of the episcopate, which he formulated, passed by successive stages of natural development into that doctrine. The difference between the teaching of the treatise "of the unity of the Church," and the decree of the Vatican Council is only a difference in degree. The earliest Anglican commentator on the Thirty-nine Articles rightly spoke of the dogma of apostolic succession as a Roman doctrine.[1]

6. It needs not that I should offer evidence for the statement that this truly Roman dogma has been reaffirmed of late years by a school of English churchmen with such pertinacity and success, that at the present time it has almost become a postulate of Anglicanism.

[1] *Vide* "Rogers on the Thirty-nine Articles," p. 175 (Parker Soc.).

The first of the famous "Tracts for the Times" was a vigorous statement of "Apostolic Succession," the fourth was significantly headed "Adherence to the Apostolic Succession the Safest Course," the fifteenth and nineteenth dealt with the same subject, and the argument of these Tracts was supported by a series of "records of the Church," among which S. CYPRIAN'S famous treatise was included. Two generations ago the teaching of the Tracts was generally resented as novel, as well as erroneous. Now it has passed into the normal language of Anglican divines. Our ecclesiastical history has been re-written from this point of view; and the Anglican of to-day is carefully taught to regard the consecration of MATTHEW PARKER as the very turning point, the "to be or not to be," of English Christianity. The twentieth century is not as the third. Even the most ardent episcopalian of to-day would shrink from the fierce intolerance of CYPRIAN which could see no sincerity in non-episcopalian goodness, and no heroism in non-episcopalian martyrdom. Yet under soft disguises of calculated euphemisms the old bad leaven works, and the intolerant theory is now, as then, hidden by the personal excellence of its advocates. Dr. PUSEY was a saintly man, whose private charities were abundant, but he could allow himself to suggest that "supernatural lives of grace" could not be exhibited by the members of a non-episcopal church, and that only when the gospel was preached by those who accompanied it by an episcopal ministry could it be permanent.[1] Lesser men than Dr. PUSEY in thousands of parishes are making the

[1] *Vide* "Eirenicon," pp. 274, 278.

same suggestions in cruder and harsher terms. A few weeks since the most widely circulated Anglican newspaper published a leading article in which the doctrine of S. CYPRIAN was applied to the sister Church of Scotland in language of deliberate and wounding insult.[1] Even the solemn pronouncements of the Lambeth Conference are found, when carefully considered, to have as their underlying assumption the same obstinate and ancient error. Thus the historic source of ecclesiastical strife is jealously guarded even when the object of reunion is professedly, and no doubt sincerely, pursued. Could the pathos of self-delusion be more impressively displayed ?

7. But I am loth to close on the note of hopelessness. There are some reassuring signs. At this moment, as the newspapers inform us, there is a conference proceeding in Upsala, between representatives of the national Churches of England and Sweden with a view to arrange closer relations and ultimate intercommunion. If we may take for granted the accuracy of the short reports of the Bishop of Winchester's sermon in Stockholm last Sunday, his lordship, as indeed might fairly be expected from him, has set aside the Cyprianic doctrine, and re-affirmed the nobler doctrine of S. PAUL. After stating that the object of his mission to Sweden was "to negotiate an alliance between the two Churches, so closely connected by tenets and historical tradition," the Bishop proceeded to say that "the alliance in question would be based on conformity in fundamental doctrine, and would aim at perfect unity independently of perfect

[1] *Vide The Church Times*, September 3, 1909.

uniformity, national characteristics being above all respected." Yes; agreement in fundamental belief *is* the true basis of religious fellowship, not acceptance of a single form of external order. If that basis be allowed, we need not go so far as Sweden to find churches with which we can and ought to be in communion. Charity might fitly begin at home: but had better begin elsewhere than not at all. When we ask what we must understand by such "fundamental belief" surely we must needs betake ourselves to the New Testament, and inquire what then, at the beginning, when apostles declared the gospel, was the core and essence of the faith. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord,—writes S. PAUL to the Romans—"and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." There is the sufficient basis for the covenant of intercommunion between the churches; all else, questions of system and discipline, may be discussed with temper when that covenant is owned, and not before. Self-assertion is always a principle of isolation. This is as true of churches as of individuals. The Church of England is the most isolated of all the churches; and also of all the reformed churches the Church of England has raised highest its denominational claim. Let us abate the latter, and we shall remedy the former. Not in the temper of mere expediency, not under the coercion of a hated necessity, but in the ardent energy of fraternal love breaking through the barriers which time and circumstance have reared, in the spontaneous sacrifice of penitence casting on the altar the surrendered claim, in the holy confidence of faith, sure that when all is finally referred

to the will of Christ, all will be well with us, let us advance to meet our long-separated brethren, and own our spiritual kinship. When all is said, there is a primary law of discipleship, the new commandment of the Lord Himself, which no later canons of ecclesiastical authority can avail to abrogate, and that law requires that Christians should prove their right to the name by mutual love: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Isolation kills sympathy; fellowship strengthens love. There is an inner witness of the spirit which like a law of nature demands expression and obedience. We stand apart in spite of ourselves; this strife of the churches is as unnatural as it is deplorable.

VIII

RICHARD BAXTER (1615—1691)[1]

THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.—PROVERBS X. 7.
BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS.—S. MATTHEW V. 9.

On November 12, 1615—according to his own statement—Richard Baxter was born. It was the Lord's day, he is careful to relate, and his birth took place "in the morning at the time of divine worship." I propose to depart from the common type of sermon in order to recall the memory of one of the best and best worth remembering of English saints.

If I could have my way, there are two books which every candidate for holy orders in the Church of England should be required to know well. The one is Richard Baxter's "Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of His Life and Times," the other is his once well-known work, "The Reformed Pastor," a treatise, as the sub-title states, "Shewing the Nature of the Pastoral Work; Especially in Private Instruction and Catechising: With an Open Confession of Our Too Open Sins, Prepared for a Day of Humiliation Kept at Worcester, December 4, 1655, by the Ministers of that County, who Subscribed the Agreement for Catechising and Personal Instruction at their Entrance

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on November 12, 1905, being the anniversary of Richard Baxter's birth.

upon that Work." If you will allow me to make a personal confession, I will freely admit that those books, which I read soon after my own ordination, made a greater and more abiding impression on me than any with which they can be compared. The one explained, as none of the ecclesiastical and anti-ecclesiastical histories of the present day are able to do, the religious situation in which we in England are placed; the other, in spite of the immense changes of social condition, which render its actual proposals obsolete, gave me a view of the greatness and the gravity of pastoral work, which the modern manuals designed for the guidance of young clergymen are not able to give. These two works, in some respects the most characteristic, and certainly among the most important, of all BAXTER's writings, will be the principal authorities on which I shall base my present discourse. Let me, in passing, advise all of you to read or read again, the luminous and delightful essay on RICHARD BAXTER included in the well-known "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography," by Sir JAMES STEPHEN.

The life of BAXTER covered a most eventful and important epoch of national history. His birth was within ten years of the Gunpowder Plot, and his death within three years of the Revolution. He was a man of twenty-five when the Long Parliament began its memorable sessions at Westminster; when he was thirty-four, CHARLES I. was beheaded in Whitehall, and within a few months of that terrible tragedy, BAXTER published the most popular of all his works, "The Saints' Everlasting Rest." At the Restoration he was in the prime of his powers, forty-five years old, and from CHARLES II.

he received the offer of the Bishopric of Hereford, which—justly suspecting the King's good faith—he declined. He was at the age of seventy-three an active opponent of the policy of JAMES II., and he lived to enjoy the benefit of the Toleration Act which distinguished the reign of WILLIAM III. When he died in 1691, his name was universally honoured by Anglicans and nonconformists alike, and when he was buried beside his wife and mother in Christ Church, London, it is said that there had never been such a private funeral seen in England. Dr. GROSART, in the "Dictionary of National Biography," sets down a list of forty-one works, and points out that these are but a part of his writings. ORME, the editor of his practical works in twenty-three volumes, has collected the names of no less than 168 separate works. "His 'Holy Commonwealth' had the distinction of being burned at Oxford along with MILTON'S and JOHN GOODWIN'S books. The most diverse minds have their favourites among his books. There never has been a day since 1649 that something by him was not in print. His works have still a matchless circulation among the English-speaking race. They have also been largely translated into many languages." He is, perhaps, the most interesting ecclesiastic of an epoch in which ecclesiastics played an unusually prominent part in the national life. Never before, and never since, has the clerical profession included so great a proportion of the ablest Englishmen. Theology was supreme in every department of thought in the seventeenth century; men governed their common life by theological arguments, and directed their political course by the chart

of scripture. BAXTER moved among his contemporaries as one who had serious personal disadvantages to contend against. From the cradle he was the martyr of disease; he believed himself to be always "looking death in the face," and in his own memorable phrase he preached, "as a dying man to dying men." Yet such was the ardour of his spirit, and the concentrated fervour of his purpose, that he lived to old age, and retained his vigour to the very end of his laborious life. He was not reared under ordinary conditions. The first ten years of his life were spent away from his parents, and I think there are signs in his later career that he had had an unhappy childhood. He was not taught in the regular way; he never went to the university like other young men designed for the ministry; and, throughout his life, he dwelt on the fact with a persistence which reveals his deep mortification. The effect of this abnormal upbringing was to stamp on him a certain incorrigible oddity, which hindered him from fitting into any groove, or accepting any party. He had an ingenuous and almost child-like inability to realize the probable aspect of his own procedure in the eyes of his contemporaries, and, though they perforce did homage to his transparent sincerity and singular courage, they never understood him, nor was he at any time popular. Ecclesiastically, moreover, he was nondescript. He had received episcopal ordination, but he repudiated episcopacy in its Anglican form; he eagerly advocated the Presbyterian discipline, but he repudiated the name Presbyterian, and, though he had himself taken the covenant, he used his influence to prevent his flock at Kidderminster from following his example. He

was the apostle of comprehension, and, none the less, he resisted the Cromwellian policy of toleration. He venerated hereditary monarchy with a religious veneration, and yet acquiesced in the despotism of CROMWELL. He denounced the pettiness of the sectaries to their faces when they were in power, and cast in his lot with them in the hour of their overthrow. He was never tired of lamenting the spiritual mischiefs of controversy, and was himself the most copious and effective controversialist of his time. He appreciated and even used the venerable formularies of the Prayer Book, but, none the less, he offended all moderate men by proposing a composition of his own as a substitute for them, when the opportunity came at the Savoy Conference. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages and inconsistencies, it will not be disputed by any student of the seventeenth century that the general opinion of his contemporaries placed RICHARD BAXTER at the head of religious men. Dr. BARROW said that "his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted," and Bishop WILKINS asserted that "if he had lived in the primitive time, he had been one of the fathers of the Church." The admirable Sir MATTHEW HALE was his intimate friend. Later judgments have been scarcely less favourable. COLERIDGE'S opinion has been often quoted:—

"Pray read with great attention BAXTER'S life of himself. It is an inestimable work. I may not unfrequently doubt BAXTER'S memory or even his competence, in consequence of his particular modes of thinking; but I could almost as soon doubt the gospel verity as his veracity."[1]

[1] *Vide* "Table Talk," p. 47.

Bishop BURNET, who was little likely to understand BAXTER'S unworldly zeal for holiness, yet describes him not unfairly as

> "A man of great piety; and, if he had not meddled in too many things, would have been esteemed one of the learned men of the age. . . . He had a very moving and pathetical way of writing, and was his whole life long a man of great zeal and much simplicity, but was most unhappily subtle and metaphysical in everything." [1]

A modern Anglican writer, Dr. LUCKOCK, while admitting that BAXTER was "absolutely without an equal in guilelessness and personal piety," accuses him of excessive self-reliance, "seeing only with his own eyes and wholly incapable of understanding the position of an opponent." This judgment finds little justification in BAXTER'S life and writings. It would be nearer the truth to say that BAXTER understood so well his opponent's position, and so largely sympathized with it, that he assumed a much closer agreement than really existed. Hence he was always suspected in his own camp, and never altogether trusted in the camp of his opponents. Friends and foes felt that he was not altogether what they required, a trimmer in fact, but of the heroic sort, with a footing in both camps, always to his own loss. No sect or party frankly approved him, and the zealots of all sects and parties regarded him with suspicion and dislike. BAXTER, like S. AUGUSTINE, has left on record an account of the changes which, in the course of time, passed over his own opinions. There are few passages in our literature which are better worth study than the pages which

[1] *Vide* "History of his Own Times," p. 123.

contain the great Puritan's self-review. No sincere and religious man can read them without loving the writer. He tells how time had moderated his controversial ardour, and enabled him to see the truths of Christianity in a juster scale of importance.

"In my youth I was quickly past my fundamentals, and was running up into a multitude of controversies, and greatly delighted with metaphysical and scholastic writings (though I must needs say, my preaching was still on the necessary points); but the elder I grew the smaller stress I laid upon these controversies and curiosities (though still my intellect abhorred confusion). . . . And now it is the fundamental doctrine of the Catechism which I highliest value and daily think of and find most useful to myself and others: the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations: they are to me as my daily bread and drink; and as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them than of any of the school niceties which once so pleased me." [1]

He tells ingenuously how his doubts had changed. When he was a young man he had never been tempted "to doubt of the truth of scripture or Christianity, but all his doubts and fears were exercised at home about his own sincerity and interest in Christ," but as he grew older "his sorest assaults had been on the other side, and such they were that, had he been void of internal experience and the adhesion of love and the special help of God and had not discerned more reason for his religion than he did when he was younger, he had certainly apostatized to infidelity." "I am now," he says, "therefore much more apprehensive than heretofore of the necessity of well grounding men in their religion, and especially of the witness of the indwelling Spirit; for I more sensibly perceive that

[1] *Vide* "Rel. Baxterianiæ," I. 127.

the Spirit is the great witness of Christ and Christianity to the world; and though the folly of fanaticks [here he glances at his conflicts with the Quakers] tempted me long to overlook the strength of this testimony of the Spirit . . . yet now I see that the Holy Ghost . . . is the witness of Christ and His agent in the world." Experience had made him much more sensible of the evil of schism, while his principles of church communion became steadily broader. His prayers took a wider range and were inspired by a more catholic spirit.

"My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of the miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of their conversion than heretofore: I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers as not considering the state of the rest of the world: or if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews that was almost all. But now as I better understand the case of the world, and the method of the Lord's Prayer, so there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart as the thought of the miserable nations of the earth. . . . No part of my prayers are so deeply serious as that for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, that God's name may be sanctified, and His kingdom come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. . . . Could we but go among Tartarians, Turks, and heathens, and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of 1,800 ministers at once in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here, and in Scotland, and Ireland: [here he makes allusion to the expulsion of the nonconformists from the parishes under the Act of Uniformity] there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes, as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls: which maketh me greatly honour Mr. JOHN ELIOT, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in such work."

He speaks with deep feeling of that great purpose of reconciling the churches, to which he had devoted himself with such strenuous devotion:—

"I am deeplier afflicted for the disagreements of Christians than I was when I was a younger Christian. Except the case of the

infidel world, nothing is so sad and grievous to my thoughts, as the case of the divided Churches. And therefore I am more deeply sensible of the sinfulness of those prelates and pastors of the Churches, who are the principal cause of these divisions."

In view of the recent proposal, as an eirenicon within the national Church, that the first six centuries should be accepted as a standard of ceremonial practice, a special interest attaches to the following words:—

"I have spent much of my studies about the terms of Christian concord, and have over and over considered of the several ways, which several sorts of reconcilers have devised: I have thought of the Papists' way, who think there will be no union, but by coming over wholly to their Church: and I found that it is neither desirable nor possible. I have thought and thought again of the way of the moderating Papists, and of those that would have all reduced to the state of the times of Gregory I., before the division of the Greek and Latin Churches, that the Pope might have his primacy, and govern all the Church by the canons of the Councils, with a salvo to the rights of kings, and patriarchs, and prelates; and that the doctrines and worship which then were received might prevail. And for my own part, if I lived in such a state of the Church, I would live peaceably as glad of unity, though lamenting the corruption and tyranny; but I am fully assured that none of these are the true desirable terms of unity, nor such as are ever like to procure an universal concord: and I am sure"—here his unconquerable belief in the ultimate amenableness of men to reason comes out—"that the true means and terms of concord are obvious and easy to an impartial willing mind."

Baxter's own proposals must be judged from the standpoint of his age; the important thing for us to note is the conclusion to which he had been brought, as to the comparative unimportance of the matters about which Christians, then as now, were quarrelling:—

"I do not lay so great stress upon the external modes and forms of worship as many young professors do. . . . I cannot be so narrow in my principles of Church-communion as many are; that are so much for a liturgy, or so much against it, so much for ceremonies, or so much against them, that they can hold communion with no Church that is not of their mind and way."

Richard Baxter

An eminent Anglican prelate of our own time, Bishop CHARLES WORDSWORTH, has called BAXTER a "disappointing man," whose "enormous amount of labour and sacrifice" produced comparatively "little lasting fruit." It is true that none of his peace-making proposals were accepted, and that he himself was driven from the ministry which he adorned, and subjected to injury and insult. The Church of England could find no use for the best pastor in the country, and refused to allow liberty of preaching to a man who had been thought worthy of a mitre. Failure waited on RICHARD BAXTER'S efforts to restore harmony to the Church of Christ, and he had to stand by in compulsory silence and watch the scandals of the Restoration. Yet if you will examine the facts more carefully, I think you will admit that, of all the individual careers then being accomplished in England, there was none which in greatness and abiding worth can compare with his. "Blessed are the peacemakers." They leave behind them on the page of history a record which for ages to come provides the precedent and occasion of reconciliation. Is it not profoundly significant that, after the lapse of more than two centuries, it should be possible for the preacher in this great church to take as the theme of his preaching the example of the Puritan divine, and should be well assured that, in doing so, he commanded the approval of his hearers?

I have recalled the memory of a peacemaker, whom both Anglicans and Nonconformists unite in honouring, because we have reached a point in our national history at which it is the clear duty of every genuine Christian

to "seek peace and ensue it." The difficulties which encounter the Christian thinker to-day are in many respects different from those which troubled the mental calm of RICHARD BAXTER, and the solutions of the problems of the spirit, which satisfied him, are little likely to satisfy us, but, in the sphere of ecclesiastical politics, we still remain in the same dilemma. The issue which seemed for the moment to have been decided by the violence of the Restoration settlement with its appendix of penal laws remains still, and we must decide it for ourselves. What shall be the foundation of religious fellowship in the national Church? Shall all be made to turn on the external, mechanical circumstance of episcopal ordination? or shall it be the spiritual fact of discipleship to Jesus Christ that shall take the primary place? "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness"—that is the catholic and fraternal language of S. PAUL. That was the rule to which RICHARD BAXTER strove to bring himself and his contemporaries. The ordained and universally recognised expression of fraternity is the act of Holy Communion. Until we can communicate together at the Lord's Table, we are, with respect to all our fellow-disciples, whose fellowship we refuse, schismatics.

Fraternal language is futile, even when it is sincere, so long as it is united to an intolerant doctrine and an exclusive attitude. Those Anglicans must be held mainly responsible for the present bitterness of religious strife who—forgetful of the lessons of our own history, and deaf to the witness of Christian experience—insist

on a theory of the Christian ministry which makes all turn on the detail whether or not ministers are episcopally ordained, and leaves out of count the facts of pastorate and the works of the Spirit. Against that theory the life and character of RICHARD BAXTER are an eloquent protest.

Looking back, we can see that the Church of England was miserably served by its leaders when—by a procedure which at the time drove out from its parishes a great multitude of earnest and able ministers—it elected to become the Church of only half the English people. The Savoy Conference was the grave of the national Church in the true sense of the word, and, until that great and calamitous blunder can be undone, there can never be religious harmony in England. Exclusion was the principle of the English bishops at the Restoration. Comprehension by recognizing all legitimate types of Christian system was the principle of RICHARD BAXTER, whom, to their eternal dishonour, the English bishops thrust from ministry and cast out from fellowship. After two centuries and a half, confronted still with the scandal and weakness of religious division, we are in front of the same solemn alternative. Exclusion or comprehension, autocracy or ordered liberty, a sectional Church claiming to be catholic, or a national Church approving itself to be Christian,—these are still the alternatives before us. I pray Almighty God that the spirit of tolerance and charity which illumined the course of the great saint whom we remember to-day, may be poured out on us all, that now, even at this late hour, there may be opened to us, English Churchmen and Nonconformists alike, an escape from

the disabling traditions of history, and a return to the way of peace. Even now may we be enabled to learn what our divine Master meant when He said to His disciples:—"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another."

II

THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL

IX

JESUS OR CHRIST?[1]

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY, YEA AND FOR EVER.—HEBREWS xiii. 8.

"JESUS or Christ?" This strange and disconcerting question is often forced on our notice at the present time, and it has a certain importance as summing up shortly a tendency of religious thought, and indicating the nature of a religious experiment which is attracting some Christian people. Neither the tendency nor the experiment is really new, for we can produce parallels and equivalents of both from those distant ages when first the gospel passed under the criticism, and into the speculation, of non-Christian and semi-Christian thinkers; but both have taken unprecedented and distinctive forms in our own time. The tendency is towards a repudiation of the unique authority of the gospel, and its absorption into an eclectic religion, hospitable enough to admit into its pantheon every form of deity. This repudiation has perforce taken the form of a severance between the historic and the theological elements of Christianity, the substitution of an ideal for a person. I say this severance has been necessitated, because the truly distinctive factor in Christianity is precisely the

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 24th Sunday after Trinity, November 21, 1909.

combination of the historic and the theological elements; and if the gospel is really to be domesticated in the new eclecticism, it can only be by disallowing the history from which it has sprung. The experiment is being made by an application, or misapplication, of historical criticism to the apostolic testimony enshrined in the New Testament. It is assumed to be possible to go behind the apostolic testimony, and recover by a critical handling of the gospels another and a truer version of the history of Jesus, than that which the apostles proclaimed and assumed. The result of this attempt is expressed in the challenge, "Jesus or Christ?" that is, history or faith; the facts certified by historical science, or the ideal built on them by generations of believers? It is taken for granted that the difference between history and faith is of such a character that the traditional unity of both is no longer permissible to thoughtful and well-informed men; and we are assured that the surrender of the history as incompatible with the faith will really nowise injure the latter, because the faith is so well entrenched in the respect due to its own merits that nothing can now affect its security. If we give up "Jesus" in deference to the "New Theologians," we are free to keep "Christ," and to clothe Him with whatsoever moral excellencies we may imagine to be becoming. I desire to examine this strange and far-reaching proposal, which is made to us with so great a parade of exact knowledge and high ethical fervour.

Let it be noted that this proposal would not concern us here if it were advanced only by those who made no claim to speak as ministers of Christ; we could have

no right, and would not wish to have any, to put shackles on the freedom with which our religion is discussed by men who do not themselves accept it; but the situation is different when from within the Christian society itself, and from those who hold the chairs of authority in the churches, teachings are put forward in the name of Christ which seem to undercut and disallow the treasured beliefs and indispensable postulates of Christian men. I do not say that even the acutest alarm may necessarily be well grounded, nor would I ever make novelty as such the criterion of religious error; but these are circumstances which justify, nay require, the attention of all Christian teachers, and must explain my present concern with the challenge which is implicit in the formula, "Jesus or Christ?"

1. Let me remind you that the suggested severance is absolutely incompatible with the apostolic witness. The identification of Jesus and Christ took place at the very beginning of Christianity. It is the obvious assumption of all the New Testament writers, and almost immediately it received its formal expression in the double name which we have in the text, Jesus Christ. If we inquire what originally caused that identification, and what established it so firmly in the acceptance of the apostles, we find the answer set forth very plainly in the New Testament. They were led to believe in Jesus as the Christ by their own close intimacy with Him during His ministry. There is no reasonable doubt that before the crucifixion He had claimed to be the Christ, and that they had endorsed His claim. Jesus Himself had challenged them on the point. "Who do men say that I am?" He had asked

them in the way towards "the villages of Cæsarea Philippi," and when they had replied by stating the various opinions respecting Him which were current among the people, He had asked again "But who say ye that I am?" To that question PETER had made answer in the tremendous confession, "Thou art the Christ."[1] That was the first Christian creed, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ." To separate the two names, and propose a choice between them, is to stultify apostolic witness from the first.

2. The "Christ idea" in the minds of the apostles was at first, save in so far as their intimate association with their Master had modified it, quite conventional. They were nowise different from their contemporaries, whose Messianic expectations they shared. Perforce they invested their Master with the attributes of such a Christ as they had been trained to expect, and counted on such achievements by Him as they had been taught to regard as the very demonstrations of Christhood.[2] But the crucifixion corrected this conventional faith. At first it seemed that their belief in Jesus as the Christ had been wholly destroyed. When the humiliated and terror-stricken disciples fled back from Jerusalem to their native Galilee, they carried broken and empty hearts, and lives which were stamped with an intolerable and irrecoverable futility. Then happened the supreme event which restored and exalted their faith. The Crucified returned to them from the grave in which they had laid Him. They saw Him, and heard Him

[1] *Vide* S. Mark viii. 27 ff.

[2] *Cf.* S. Matthew xvi. 22, xvii. 10 f., xix. 27, xx. 20 ff.; S. Mark ix. 33 ff.

wondrously. He claimed them, rebuked their despondency, commissioned them for a grand ministry of witness, and parted from them with words of benediction. This restored and exalted faith in Jesus as the Christ was the creature of the resurrection, and it at once dwarfed His earthly ministry into relative unimportance, and invested it with supreme and eternal significance. Let me emphasize the paradox. The living present Lord, glorious and militant, absorbed all attention. In the fervour of the great assurance they went forth, clothed with power from on high, and "preached Christ." They had the demonstration of their message in the central element of their preaching, "Christ is risen." This was the summary of their gospel, "they preached Jesus and the resurrection." This concentration of mind on the Lord Himself is naturally most conspicuous in S. PAUL, for he had no treasure of holy recollections such as the original apostles possessed from pre-resurrection days. His own conversion had been effected by an appearance of the risen Master, and his continuous labours as a missionary had been always holding him to the central fact that Christ was present in saving power with His Church. The opening words of the epistle to the Romans exhibit the identification of Jesus and Christ in its full Pauline form, and indicate the manner of the apostle's thinking on the subject. The passage has something of the aspect of a deliberate confession of faith : "PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning His son, who was born of the seed of DAVID according to the flesh, who was

declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for His name's sake: among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's: to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." You observe that the identification of Jesus and Christ is conscious, categorical, and complete. A doctrine about His person emerges inevitably. So much was necessitated by the history and contents of the Christ idea. If Jesus were the Christ, then it followed that He entered into possession of the prophecies which had drawn the picture of the Christ on the canvas of scripture. If this prophetic ideal realized in Jesus were to be correlated with the fact of the resurrection, and with the manifest and powerful action which called and commissioned apostles, and made their preaching mighty to save, then the prophetic ideal itself must be almost indefinitely enlarged and exalted. The divine dignity, nay, the true deity, of the Christ, whom S. Paul confessed in Jesus, emerges naturally in his language. As an evangelist, he was primarily concerned with preaching the gospel of salvation in and through this divine and reigning Person; the history of the private life and public teaching of Jesus could not take a principal place in that doctrine of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," to which avowedly S. Paul in proclaiming the message limited himself, and by which he gathered his converts. The Gospel was essentially contained in those grand acts of the redemption, which

he enumerates to the Corinthians, and which bind Christianity fast for ever to the history of Jesus: "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried: and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures: and that He appeared."

3. While, however, the identification of Jesus and Christ implied such a concentration of mind on His person, and on the supreme acts of the redemption with which His earthly life closed, and His risen life began, as to throw into relative obscurity the details of His history, it manifestly follows that those details, so far from being really cast aside as unimportant, were clothed with supreme interest and significance. It is nothing better than a grotesque travesty of the facts to say with a well-known London minister, writing in the recently published "Hibbert Journal Supplement," that "the Christ of the apostle PAUL bore little or no relation to the actual Jesus of Galilee," that "for PAUL the earthly ministry of Jesus does not exist," that "all he has to say about Christ could just as well have been said under any other name than that of Jesus."[1] Such assertions are as mischievous as they are grotesque. They imply the plainly irrational assumption that the entire teaching of the apostle is to be found in the epistles which the New Testament contains. They omit to allow for the knowledge about Jesus, which S. PAUL takes for granted that the readers of those epistles possess, and which they certainly had received from himself. Let me illustrate the argument from the

[1] Rev. R. J. Campbell's article in "Jesus or Christ?" p. 189.

undoubted epistles of S. PAUL. When in order to persuade the Corinthians to contribute generously to the fund he was collecting for the poverty-smitten disciples of Palestine, the apostle says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor," could the words have been spoken with equal fitness about one who had not been as the Son of man, who was so poor that "He had not where to lay His head"? Is it not plain that the Corinthians knew enough of the history of Jesus to be able to appreciate the reference to His poverty? Again, when in the same epistle, S. PAUL "intreats" the Corinthians "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," could the appeal have been made with any effect, if the Corinthians had not known what the gospel narratives have to tell us about the character of Jesus? Or, in the epistle to the Romans, when he commends his appeal for charitable self-suppression in the matter of meats, by the statement, that "Christ also pleased not Himself," does it make no difference whether the Romans could fill out the reference with a knowledge of the history of Jesus, or not? Which is the natural supposition, that they could do this, and were intended to do so, or the contrary? When S. PAUL bids the Galatians "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ," does not the admonition owe most of its force to the fact that the life of Jesus had provided a supreme example of such service? Generally, does not the exhortation to "imitate" Christ in conduct imply a knowledge, such as our gospels give us, of His earthly life? Does not S. PAUL's practice of quoting specific commandments of the Lord

as finally determining practical questions, such as those connected with marriage,[1] and with the maintenance of the ministry,[2] imply on his part the highest possible estimate of the history of Jesus, and on the part of his readers a recognition of that history as forming, so far as it went, a supremely authoritative revelation of Christ's mind ? Finally, if with some eminent critics of our own time,[3] we may endorse the immemorial belief of Christendom with respect to the authorship of the third gospel, we can be in no possible doubt that the synoptic tradition of the Master's life, which S. PAUL'S "beloved physician" compiled, was familiar to the apostle, and underlies his references to Jesus.

4. Having postulated this groundless and quite improbable indifference of S. PAUL to the history of Jesus, the writer I have quoted proceeds to describe the history itself as having no religious importance. It does not matter, according to him, whether the narratives of the New Testament are or are not true. He is even indifferent to the verdict they render as to the character of Him whom Christendom has ever worshipped as the incarnate Son of God. He allows, indeed, that "the being who could inspire others with a faith in God which issued in such a consistent effort to live for the benefit of mankind must have been extraordinary"; but immediately adds the terrible and profane assertion that He also was a sinner as the rest. Forgive me for inflicting on you the pain of listening to language so strange and so repulsive on the lips of a

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 10.
[2] 1 Cor. ix. 14, *cf.* 1 Tim. v. 18, Acts xx. 35.
[3] *E.g.*, Harnack and Ramsay.

Christian minister. "To speak of Him as morally perfect is absurd; to call Him sinless is worse, for it introduces an entirely false emphasis into the relations of God and man." I cannot pretend to understand what is here meant; but there is no ambiguity about the main statement. The so-called "new theology" is declared by its principal exponent to imply the sinfulness of Jesus.

Be it observed that in this teaching the "new theology" contradicts the unanimous testimony of the apostles. Even SCHMIEDEL admits that "as far as Jesus is concerned it is certain that all the writers of the New Testament assumed His sinlessness."[1] Since Christ, the object of Christian worship, is thus sharply parted from the Jesus of the gospels, we perforce inquire what precisely we are to understand that we worship, when we, following the immemorial, continuous, and universal practice of the Church, offer prayers to Jesus Christ. We cannot pray to a fellow-sinner; it seems ridiculous to pray to a personified ideal which we have fashioned for ourselves. "I maintain," writes SCHMIEDEL candidly, "a clear distinction between the term 'Jesus' and 'Christ' in my own practice, and demand that it shall be maintained in the intercourse of theologians with one another; at the same time we cannot count on laymen understanding the distinction and themselves observing it."[2] Laymen will not stand alone in their inability to accept the distinction. "If Jesus was not God," wrote Bishop CREIGHTON shortly and clearly, "Christianity is not a

[1] *Vide* "Jesus or Christ?" p. 68.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

religion, but a contribution to moral philosophy. But mankind wants a religion, and it is as a religion that Christianity works in the world."[1] SCHMIEDEL carries his complaisance for the layman so far as to suggest a form of prayer which might be addressed to this Jesus, whom he has severed from Christ.

"As to the special question of prayer to Jesus, it would perhaps be not impracticable that prayers which, to a deeper insight, ought to be addressed only to God, should be laid aside by a process of replacing them with others which no one feels reluctance in addressing to Jesus. Their content might be somewhat as follows : 'Be Thou my guiding star ; let Thy image stand ever before mine eyes ; rule my heart ; make me Thy disciple.'"[2]

This is a singular formulary, and it is addressed to a singular object of worship. I do not think it is likely to replace the ancient forms of Christian prayer : "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace."

5. A few days ago there was published the prayer which was actually used on November 4 in the City Temple, and addressed to one who is evidently identified with the historic Jesus. In many respects it is a significant prayer, and deserves consideration by thoughtful Christians, who would discover whereto this "new theology" is tending. Let me read it to you[3] :—

"O Lord Christ, long as it is since Thou didst first speak on earth and in the flesh to humble toilers on the hillsides of Galilee,

[1] *Vide* "Life and Letters," Vol. II., p. 256.
[2] *Vide ibid.*, p. 79.
[3] *Vide The Christian Commonwealth*, November 10, 1909.

the toilers have not ceased to think about Thee, and the world can never again be as though Thou hadst not been. Men and women, weak and weary ones, sorrowful and sinful, have somehow learned to invoke Thee, to think Thou canst do great things on their behalf. If they have been mistaken it is a sad mistake, and the world is the poorer for having made it, the richer for having thought that Thou wast throned in heaven. But there has been no mistake; we feel, we know, that what Thou art ought to be enthroned at the heart of things, and we come to Thee, the One who ought to be enthroned, and therefore is; all the best instincts of our nature tell us so, and we ask Thee to help us. We are trying to fight the battle Thou hast fought; we are trying to win the victory Thou hast won. We have not fought so well, and we have not won yet, and we pray to Thee to help us here amid the darkness and the ignorance and the sorrow and the difficulty and the dangers of earth; help us that we may attain as Thou hast attained, and come home to what Thou art. We ask it for the sake of the love of God made manifest in man. Amen."

Now this is mostly a soliloquy, rather than a prayer. The reference to "the hillsides of Galilee" compels us to suppose that it is addressed to the historic Jesus, that is, to the very Person, whom the author of this prayer has told us bluntly it is absurd to regard as either morally perfect or sinless. In that case, what can the prayer mean, and what can it be supposed to effect? On the kindest estimate is it more than a pietistic rhapsody which does equal credit to the heart, and violence to the reason, of the rhapsodist? If, indeed, our only security for the truth of the Christian revelation of "Our Father which art in heaven" is our conviction that what ought to be therefore is, where are we better off than those pre-Christian saints who hoped against hope for the victory of good? Experience is against us. Nature is against us. Our theory compels us to hold that not even in Jesus did the iron empire of evil and death fail of its triumph. Were it not better

to face the terrible issue like men, and admit with S. PAUL that "if Christ hath not been raised, our faith is vain: we are yet in our sins"? Contrast this prayer of the "new theologian" with the prayer with which the epistle to the Hebrews concludes: "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even the Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." There is strength and divine assurance, and strong reasonableness in that prayer, and it rises to heaven on the wings of that faith of apostles and saints which hath overcome the world, even the faith "that Jesus is the Son of God."

6. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." These are not the words of a bigoted opponent of salutary change. They are not the great formula which is to disguise the little policy of mere obscurantism. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews must have sustained among his brethren the difficult and suspected *rôle* of a religious innovator. He was the author and advocate of a new theology. All this adds immensely to the significance of his declaration. He lays hold of the fixed factor in Christianity, that which is the indispensable postulate of every sound theology, and the verifying element in all theologies; and he offers it as the justification of his novel teaching, and the palladium of Christian faith. The temple, he tells his Jewish fellow disciples, will perish: all that the temple symbolizes and enables will

pass away: Jerusalem will be desolate, and the religion of national privilege, which has found its centre there, will come to an end; but this immense demolition of sacred institutions and time-honoured traditions will not touch the core of your faith, nay, it will enable you to realize more truly what that core of your faith really is. You will find that the springs of spiritual life are in no system, but in the person of the Lord, in whom every system must find meaning, apart from whom all systems are nothing. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." In Him Judaism has found its meaning and lost its authority, and reached its term. You must see Him henceforward in larger connections, and apply His teaching to new conditions.

7. After more than eighteen centuries the Church of Christ is confronted by another crisis, different and yet similar. The same Christian teacher's words are again on our lips, but richly freighted with the confirmations of Christian experience, and we would find in them the courage to innovate, as well as the obligation to hold fast. We, like the Jewish believers of the second generation, who witnessed the downfall of the Jewish polity, must have a "new theology" in order that we may gather up into our faith the lessons of experience and the garnered fruits of human progress. Our clear perception of this necessity, and our frank acknowledgment of it, must not blind us to the essential condition of every change, which shall be progress and not retrogression. May we not still serve ourselves of the language of the New Testament in order to formulate that indispensable condition, which is to be for us, as for every previous generation of believers, the criterion of all theologies

which claim our acceptance? "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God." Does the "new theology" bring the Saviour more effectively into the thought and life of our time? or does it, with whatever words of calculated compliment, banish Him farther from both? Is the new way of describing Jesus Christ better able to set Him as Saviour and as judge before the sin-stricken society of our knowledge? Does the new reading of His life, and the new interpretation of His message, help men the better to perceive and to acknowledge His lordship? Does the "new theology" make more or less of Jesus Christ than the old? Nay, the words were ill-chosen; there can be no less or more, for He is supreme; but is His supremacy vindicated and owned over a larger area of human life? As our science grows, and our experience multiplies problems and unfolds opportunities, is "the proportion of the faith" maintained, and Jesus Christ shown in an ever-changing world to be "the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever"? These are the questions which every theology must answer before it can justify its name, or warrant Christians in accepting it. Pour what meanings you will, and must, into the disciple's profession, nothing can ever authorize any tampering with the profession itself: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

But a so-called "new theology" which proposes the impossible alternative, Jesus or Christ? and calmly

accepts the blasphemous postulate of the Saviour's sinfulness, is not Christian theology at all, and needs no other arguments to determine its prompt and indignant repudiation at the hands of Christian men. "We have not so learned Christ."

X

OLD RELIGION AND NEW THEOLOGY [1]

I EXHORTED THEE TO TARRY AT EPHESUS, WHEN I WAS GOING INTO MACEDONIA, THAT THOU MIGHTEST CHARGE CERTAIN MEN NOT TO TEACH A DIFFERENT DOCTRINE.—I TIMOTHY i. 3.

I DO not propose to discuss the critical questions which have been raised in connection with the authorship and date of the pastoral epistles. Probably opinion will always be divided on those subjects, and in face of that circumstance the candid preacher will never be able to use without explanation and reserve the testimony of these important and suggestive writings. On the present occasion, however, I avail myself of the language of the first pastoral epistle in order to place before you a situation which has been often presented in the course of Christian history, which was presented notably at the close of the apostolic age, and is notoriously being presented at the present time. Believers have been confronted with the perplexing fact of doctrinal innovation; they have heard from their religious leaders strange teachings, which they cannot correlate with the truth which they have received; they are called upon to revise their beliefs, and accept, often at very short notice, a "new theology," and very

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 20th Sunday after Trinity, October 24, 1909.

naturally they are disturbed in their minds, and shadowed by a grave fear lest the very bases of faith are giving way. It is not necessary that I should offer evidences that this situation now exists, for I can take you all to witness that such is indeed the case.

1. Let me observe that there is nothing necessarily alarming in a "new theology." Every living theology must needs be new, for theology is the synthesis of two factors, one invariable and the other perpetually varying, and naturally the changes in the latter have their effect on the combination of both. The unalterable factor is called in the New Testament the "gospel," "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," "the sound doctrine," "the doctrine which is according to righteousness," "the truth as it is in Jesus." It is grandly summarized in its source and essence by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, when he declares that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." The changing factor is the sum of human knowledge, with which this Gospel of an unchanging Christ has to be harmonized. Intelligent Christians cannot acquiesce in mental chaos, and to such must their faith bring them until it has become expressed in a theology. From this indispensable expression of faith as theology emerges a formidable peril to faith. For a satisfying theology, having once been secured, readily acquires an authority of its own, to which it has no proper title. Religious men unconsciously transfer to it the sacred attributes of the gospel, and resent any criticism of it as if such criticism profaned the arcana of faith. Yet nothing is more certain than that the theology of the Christian Church is in perpetual flux,

in spite of the natural reluctance of devout Christians to admit the fact, and, we must add, in spite of the tremendous and violent efforts made by ecclesiastical authorities to avoid theological innovation. A retrospect of Christian experience is the best prophylactic against the fears of an irrational conservatism and the infection of fanaticism.

2. Let us remember, moreover, that it is mere matter of fact that Christianity has for long periods been gravely misconceived by its professors. Doctrines that all Christians are now agreed to reject have been in previous ages of the Church tenaciously held, and, if extent and duration of belief were the tests of intrinsic importance, we should have to conclude that these may be pleaded as easily in the interest of recognized error as in that of recognized truth. In every age there are specific parts of the Christian system which, for quite intelligible reasons, draw to themselves the principal attention of Christian men, and, then, inevitably these are exalted to a position of superiority which by no means rightly belongs to them, and which can be shown to reflect the special circumstances of the Church at the time, rather than the intrinsic value of the paramount dogmas themselves. Thus we may say that in times of secular distress, persecution, and calamity there has been a disposition to fasten on the eschatological elements of the Christian tradition. The afflicted Church of the earliest ages, for instance, was readily disposed to an over-confident dogmatism with respect to the second advent of Christ: the vast dogmatic system of the Western Church, which deals with the fortunes of the human spirit after its departure from the

body, was developed in the most troubled period of the middle ages. The Apocalypse, which has been the common source from which the materials of eschatological speculation have most freely been drawn, may almost be regarded as an indicator of ecclesiastical affliction. When that book has been most precious in Christian eyes, and most often on Christian lips, we may be sure that the worldly circumstances of Christian folk were unusually depressing. The intellectual level of an age reflects itself in the religious system. Thus the barbarous epoch of Christian experience coincided with the development of materialistic sacramentalism. The higher, more spiritual aspects of Christianity were beyond the apprehension of men who had but just emerged from the debased beliefs and practices of paganism, and, accordingly, the missionaries of the gospel were under the strongest inducements to press on them those more intelligible elements of the Christian system, which, just because they were the most intelligible to barbarians, were shown to be the least exalted. Transubstantiation, and the necessity of sacerdotal absolution, were formally bound upon the Western Church in the thirteenth century, but the Papal legislation of that period only expressed, and gave formal recognition to, ideas and practices which were already of long standing. We might illustrate our thesis by many other examples, but there is no need, for the fact admits of no serious dispute. It is a mere truism that the "centre of gravity" in current Christianity is constantly shifting, and that the principal agent in the process at any given time is the pressure of external circumstances.

3. It is, then, very evident that theology is properly mutable, and never "continues in one stay." There is, of course, as we shall see immediately, an unalterable core of truth, which forms the subject-matter of theological speculation, and which, however variously handled, remains essential to the religion, of which indeed it is the very principle of life; but that unchanging truth is patient of many presentments, and subject to almost infinite misunderstanding. The paradox is as certain as at first sight it is dismaying—the theological truth of one age may be, and often is, the theological error of another. The reason is twofold. On the one hand, theologians may have misconceived the primitive revelation; on the other hand, they may have conceived it rightly but in limited and therefore false connections. Their knowledge was too slight to admit of any better statement than they offered; and, in point of fact, the orthodoxy they defended was for them and their contemporaries the truest version of Christianity within their reach. As knowledge accumulated, however, the theological definitions became defective; they were no longer properly adjusted to the facts which had to be reckoned with; and, being thus inevitably obsolete, they became for later ages actually and increasingly false. Theology, then, is never more than a provisional correlation of Christian truth with the rest of human knowledge. That Christian truth, being a divine revelation made once for all in the person of Jesus Christ, is unchanging, but there is an infinite possibility of change in the human knowledge with which it must from time to time be correlated; and the theological statement, in which the correlation is expressed, will vary

accordingly from age to age. Indeed it is strictly true to say that a theological statement begins to become obsolete almost as soon as it has been formulated: for it, like an Act of Parliament, sums up and marks the triumph of a movement of opinion, which begins at once, almost with the regularity of the tides, to recede from its "high-water mark." The process in the one case is much slower than in the other, but there is a true parallelism. We may, therefore, nay we must, acquiesce in a continual succession of "new theologies"; and nothing can really be concluded against any specific version of Christianity merely on the ground of novelty.

4. It is not, perhaps, superfluous to point out that in claiming this freedom of continuous self-rectification, we do but place theology on a level with the rest of the sciences. If scientific men justly resent gibes against the natural sciences based on the rapidity with which theories rise and fall within the scientific area; if they justly insist on the properly progressive character of studies which are continually increasing their materials, it would seem to be sufficiently clear that they are bound in equity to concede an equal liberty to the theologians, who can plead the same excuse for their variations. All the sciences have their postulates, which are unalterable, and theology is no exception: but all have to apply those postulates in ever-varying circumstances, with reference to an ever-enlarging accumulation of knowledge, and again theology is no exception. A familiar example will be the Christian doctrine with respect to the creation of the universe. The opening chapters of Genesis were held by theo-

logians right down to the precincts of the last generation to provide an accurate and detailed account of the origin of the universe. There was no serious rival to that account; there were no facts ascertained by men of science and cognizable by the theologians which invalidated the accepted doctrine of the Church: the wisest and most learned of Christians could offer no serious objection to the statements of the Bible. Then, as we all know, came the rapid development of the physical sciences. Astronomy led the way, geology followed next, biology came last and went farthest; and men became conscious of an immense discrepancy between the current doctrine and the new knowledge. We all know what happened. A panic seized religious minds; devout men spoke longingly of a past when none doubted, and scornfully, though with manifest fear, of a present when every advance in knowledge seemed to multiply doubts. BROWNING has drawn his description from life when he puts into the mouth of his cynical Bishop BLOUGRAM the gibe against believers:—

> "You'll say, once all believed, man, woman, child,
> In that dear middle-age these noodles praise.
> How you'd exult if I could put you back
> Six hundred years, blot out cosmogony,
> Geology, ethnology, what not
> (Greek endings, each the little passing-bell
> That signifies some faith's about to die)
> And set you square with Genesis again!"

That precipitate and involuntary repugnance of believers to the rude shaking of their traditional theology by facts, which were incompatible with it, was very regrettable. The men of science were looked

upon and treated as enemies of revealed truth, and many a shameful chapter of persecution, which we would give much to tear out of the record of the Church, was added to the history of mankind; but as time went on, and the martyrs of science drew in their train an ever-multiplying body of enthusiastic disciples, who pursued the same course, and built on ever securer foundations the fabric of scientific truth, a change passed over Christian minds. The epoch of persecution was succeeded by the epoch of arbitrary reconciliation. Theology was in a transitional state, perplexed between the clear statements of the Book of Genesis and the equally clear and much better authenticated statements of the men of science, conscious of her proper task not to repudiate knowledge, but to correlate it with her own first principles, pledged to bring into her scheme of truth all that could fairly be gathered under that description. The curious, most ingenious, most well-intentioned, but, we must add, most futile, and in many directions, mischievous, literature of the Biblical harmonizers came into existence and attained an immense bulk. Obviously this situation could not be permanent. The harmonists neither satisfied the old orthodoxy nor the new science. What was needed was a "new theology," which should frankly surrender so much of the former as was necessary in order frankly to accept the latter.

5. Now, if I may assume your provisional agreement so far, I may ask you seriously to consider the question which immediately confronts us, and that with special urgency, since, as I have already postulated, we are ourselves passing through a religious crisis of grave

and far-reaching significance. What is the unchanging core of Christianity, which is capable of correlation with all truth as it is gradually manifested to mankind, and which will only find final expression in a perfect theology when the stage of progress in knowledge merges into a stage of complete understanding, and when, to adopt the phrase of S. PAUL, "we know even as we have been known"? What is the postulate of all the theologies that have been, are, and shall be in the Christian Church? What is it that constitutes Christianity a religion, nay, the religion of humanity, which is tacitly assumed whenever the preacher mounts the pulpit, and the missionary goes forth to his work? What is it that permits us to speak still in the old, firm language of apostles and saints, to utter our faith in the time-honoured confessions of the past, to read it into the language of long obsolete theologies, to know ourselves to be linked in unity of belief and worship with all generations of Christians? To find the answer to these questions is to have discovered the criterion of legitimate theological change and the test of heresies.

6. It will not escape you that part of the answer must be furnished by the experience of the Church. I have appealed to that experience in order to justify the proposition that theologies are always new, because if they are not new, they are obsolescent, or obsolete, or dead; and I appeal to the same tribunal for a judgment on this question also. What does Christian history clearly indicate as unchanging in the whole course of theological development? Stand where you will in the sequences of the centuries since the faith of Christ was

proclaimed on the earth, and what is that factor which will guarantee the identity of Christianity? What runs like a golden thread through these tracts of time? Let me set aside at once as quite insufficient any merely mechanical continuity of institution or of formula. STILLINGFLEET'S accusation against Roman Catholics that "though they innovated things never so much, yet it hath been always the policy of that Church not to innovate names that so the incautelous might be better deceived with a pretence of antiquity"[1] is not without relevance in the case of other Christians, and certainly, when the object in view is not a cheap controversial success, but the satisfaction of a solemn and indispensable religious demand, we cannot allow ourselves to be cheated by words. We must go behind words to their meanings, and satisfy no less severe critic than our own understanding. With this caution, then, I should make answer to the question we have propounded without hesitation. The unchanging factor in Christianity has been an attitude towards Jesus Christ, and, as implicit therein, such a belief as permits that attitude. No Christian at any time, in the rudest society of the middle age and in the most cultured modern Church, has ever felt any real difficulty in understanding, and so far as his intelligence and sincerity permitted, making his own the declaration of S. PAUL, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The practical bearings of that confession have not

[1] *Vide* "Irenicum," p. 238.

always been the same. To the ascetic of the Thebaid, or the altruistic mendicant of mediæval Italy, the practical content of his personal creed differed widely from that of the persecuted Huguenot of the sixteenth century, or the devout Anglican of the nineteenth, but the spiritual attitude expressed was identical. Though the Christian theologies have been many, the Christian faith has been one. All Christians would have united in worshipping Christ, and none would have endured a theology which was incompatible with such worship. Set them down to write out what they regarded as the indispensable credenda, and you would obtain a pitiful spectacle of difference, but reduce the varying statements to this single point, the attitude they imply towards the Founder, and the belief with respect to Him, and you will find a solid agreement. At the close of a sermon, I cannot develop this aspect of our theme, but I beg you to reflect on it. The Christian Church, weary of controversies and no longer able to sustain her traditional theology in many directions, can make her own the apostle's declaration, and find as he did consolation in the fact: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus."

7. S. Paul, we may not forget, passed among his contemporaries as the author of a "new theology," and on that account suffered much at their hands. The circumstance adds to the solemnity of his warning against that "different doctrine," which the heretics of Ephesus were teaching. None knew better than the great apostle where the unfailing strength of the Christian religion was stored: none welcomed more

eagerly the teachings of experience. He transformed the theology of the Church, and withal stood like a rock against every teaching which impinged on the central verity of the gospel. What would have been his verdict to-day if he had been called in our generation to investigate the claims of a "new theology," which seems to speak of the historic character and even the existence of Jesus Christ as fairly open to question, and finds nothing in the cross of Calvary but one more tragedy of martyrdom? What would he have said of a Christianity which no longer worships the Son of God, or looks forward to a personal resurrection, or trembles before a final judgment? That he would express himself on all these momentous subjects after the manner of the twentieth century may go without saying, but can you imagine him sanctioning as a possible version of the faith of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" the strange amalgam of bad criticism and good advice which is now being forced on us in some quarters under the grotesque description of a "new theology"? Would he have written to a Christian minister in London in any other terms than those which he addressed to TIMOTHY in Ephesus bidding him "charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith"?

XI

THE FAILURE OF TRADITION[1]

MAKING VOID THE WORD OF GOD BY YOUR TRADITION.
S. MARK vii. 13.

1. THE words of Christ discover a very amazing conflict, and indicate a very lamentable perversion. Addressing the solemn leaders of an ancient national church, He tells them that their tradition is so deeply opposed to the word of God that to be loyal to the one is to be false to the other, to obey the one is to empty the other of meaning. Could opposition proceed farther or conflict be more violent? What is "tradition"? What is its professed object? What is its sole title to human regard? What is the test of its value? To ask these questions is to be brought within sight of a dismaying and lamentable perversion. For by "the tradition of the elders," which the evangelist says the Pharisees held, we must understand the set of casuistic principles and practical regulations which had come down from the past, and were commended by the wisdom of the most eminent teachers, and by the example of the most revered saints. The object of rabbinic casuistry was thoroughly valid and salutary. How shall the divine law be made serviceable to men,

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 13th Sunday after Trinity, September 5, 1909.

so that they may be able, in the bewildering complications of social life, to find in it "a lamp unto their feet and light unto their paths"? To find the answer to this question is the object of all casuistry, as well Christian as rabbinic or pagan. None can deny that the question needs answering; and few will doubt that the accumulated decisions and precedents of the past have a *primâ facie* title to consideration when the task of answering it is seriously undertaken. We must not suppose that our Lord disallowed the object, or even condemned the method, of the Pharisees, whom yet He accused of "making void the word of God by their tradition."

2. Christ never disputed the obligation of the Mosaic law, or the authority of the established hierarchy. It was, indeed, natural to suppose the contrary—natural I mean in the case of simple folk who heard Him often criticizing the current system, and knew that He was regarded by the officials with extreme disfavour. We may detect in His language the intention to correct an existing misconception about Himself and the effect of His teaching. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets," He said: "I came not to destroy but to fulfil." He retorted on His opponents the accusation they were so eager to fasten on Him. The real destroyers of the Mosaic law were those who "made void the word of God by their tradition." Christ would not suffer His disciples to make of His teaching an argument for religious secession. He even emphasized the validity of the title to respect, which their office conferred on the leaders of the national Church. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat," He said:

"all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." The distinction between such obedience to precept and disregard of example was manifestly incapable of permanent maintenance. A hierarchy which could command no more than that limited and contemptuous obedience was plainly stricken and passing away. When one "tradition" is convicted of "making void the word of God," it is losing its hold and has but a short time. But the final catastrophe, in which the Jewish Church was overwhelmed, and out of which the Christian Church was born, was not brought about by any revolutionary action on the part of Christ's disciples.

3. The object of "tradition," or authoritative casuistry, is not to "make void" the word of God, but to provide such an interpretation of it as shall qualify it for practical use. If that be the object, then evidently the determining principle of sound tradition must be sought not in a punctilious regard for the letter of the divine law, but in a genuine sympathy with its spirit. The task of the moral teacher will be, not that of the grammarian merely, or that of the lawyer, or that of the scribe, but beyond all these, and in addition to them, that of the prophet. We must remember that two contemporary and conflicting traditions had come down from the past, and were actually finding effective expression at the time. There was the "tradition of the elders," that is, of such great teachers as HILLEL and SHAMMAI, or the scribes of former generations, and this magnified the letter of the Mosaic law and made it fit the circumstances of human life by a marvellously subtle

system of hair-splitting interpretations, which forced into the sacred text, or out of it, some specific direction for practical use in every contingency of human action. Obligation was balanced against obligation: an arbitrary graduation of moral claims was established: duty was finally expressed in a precise and authoritative demand from an external authority. This rabbinic tradition was that which the Pharisees held, and concerning which Christ said that it "made void" the word of God, emptied it of its treasure of moral guidance, and rendered it as a rule of conduct actually misleading. Against this purely external tradition S. JOHN the Baptist had in that generation taught the older tradition of the prophets. This found the guiding principle within the individual conscience, and recognized in the written "word of God" a solemn appeal to that authority, and an authoritative affirmation of its utterances. This prophetic tradition made the conscience, illuminated by the divine Spirit, the interpreter of the sacred text, and recognized no validity in the latter where it contradicted the former. With the prophet MICAH, this tradition said to the inquirer, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." In other words, the Pharisaic tradition treated the "word of God" as the utterance of a banished authority, recorded in the past, and left as a perpetual statute for the courts to interpret; the prophetic tradition rather fastened on the thought of God as ever present with His people, and found in His written word a declaration of His mind authenticated and interpreted by His Spirit in the consciences

of His servants. The one tradition "made void" the ancient law by stripping it of any relation to the human conscience; the other made it full with the deeper senses and larger applications which had grown from experience inspired and illumined by religion. S. PAUL has summed up the differences between the two traditions in one luminous sentence: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

4. The nature and the reason of the failure of rabbinic tradition are illustrated by our Lord in the case of the fifth commandment. No one will deny that the practical application of that commandment is not at all times manifest. The duty to parents not rarely comes into collision with other duties, which may well be thought to have superior title to respect. Moreover, there is ambiguity in the commandment itself. What precisely is meant by "honouring" one's parents? Does the divine law set no limits to parental claim? Is the right to be "honoured" inherent in the natural relationship, and wholly separated from personal justifications? May it not be cancelled by other and even more binding obligations? May it not be forfeited by parental wrong-doing? These are not frivolous or impractical questions: they carry to the heart of human duty as it actually faces men: and disclose the problems which they must solve in some way, if they are to find the divine law something more than a dead letter. Our Saviour sets in contrast the fifth commandment and the decision of the rabbis on one such question, very urgent then, and often within the Christian Church urgent since. Does the duty to honour parents require that a son should sacrifice a religious design in order to

provide for their needs? Ought he to take the money which he had vowed to place in the temple treasury in order to save his needy parents from distress? The rabbis decided that the claim of the temple treasury must override the claim of the parents: they set the ecclesiastical obligation created by the vow above the moral obligation declared in the fifth commandment. "Ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother: making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do." The mere setting forth of the original law side by side with the traditional casuistry which explained it away was sufficient to condemn the latter.

5. When we inquire what lay at the root of this immense perversion, we shall perhaps discover that it was nothing less than a false identification of the will of God with the ordinance of an external authority claiming to speak in His name. This false identification of "the tradition of the elders," as received and re-affirmed by the ecclesiastical authority with the "word of God," necessarily involved two grave consequences. In the first place the tradition was really set above the divine commandment, which it professed only to interpret. For, necessarily, when once the voice of the ecclesiastical authority has been identified with the voice of God, then the authority of the tradition is no wise inferior to the authority of the divine commandment, and has the superior obligation which properly belongs to the later utterance. The tradition

is as a codicil attached to a will, added to the latter by the very author of it, and therefore assumed to express his final determination. The will must be governed by the codicil, and read subject to the limitations therein prescribed. In the next place the clothing of the ecclesiastical decision with divine authority involved setting "the tradition of the elders" above the verdicts of the individual conscience. For how could modesty endure, or reason justify, the advancing of such verdicts against the very pronouncement of God? "Private judgment" cannot vindicate any rights against the declared will of God; and if indeed that will be sufficiently certified by an external authority of the rabbis, then the decision of the rabbis must override all protests of the individual conscience and prevail.

6. These are serious consequences. Even the ardent advocate of tradition will not deny that the subjection of the written word of God to an ecclesiastical authority, and the disallowance of private judgment, are matters so grave that only a clear demonstration of title could justify their acceptance. For experience has made it very plain that the shaping of the tradition has not been exempted from certain risks, which appear to attach to all human action: and it needs no proving that the ecclesiastical authority, *ex hypothesi* divine, has been administered by men who exhibit no convincing evidences of superior goodness or wisdom. Take the case to which our Lord made reference. Could any deny that the tradition which sacrificed parental claims to the claim of the temple treasury had an obvious connection with the secular interest of the temple hierarchy? that therefore, when the members

of that hierarchy fulfilled their official task of interpreting the law, they were really subject to the temptation to serve their own interests? that by every consideration of prudence and justice they must be held to be disqualified by that circumstance? that the broad effect of their action, under the actual conditions, was to compromise the tradition they declared, by all those factors which in common life invalidate verdicts and annihilate confidence? The phrase of Christ takes a dark suggestiveness when these questions are raised. The tradition of the elders comes to be verily the tradition of certain interested parties, whose biased verdicts "make void the word of God."

7. The Jewish Church was nowise singular in its casuistry. Take the gospels and set them beside the casuists of Christendom, and you will be confronted by the same amazing conflict and have to acknowledge the same lamentable perversion. One example will suffice. The very question debated by the Pharisees in the time of Christ was also debated by the casuists of the Western Church, who—with Christ's words before them—reaffirmed the rabbinic tradition. How far may the parental claim be allowed to interfere with the religious action of children? I need not remind you that the word "religious" has a limited significance in the pages of the casuists. To be "religious" means there to enter a convent: to profess a vocation to religion means to take the vows of a monk or nun. Many questions are raised and discussed with respect to the adjustment of the apparently conflicting claims of natural duty and formal religion. What degree of parental necessity may hinder sons from entering the

cloister? If his parents are starving, may a son leave the cloister to aid them? Do sons commit sin if they enter "religion" without the consent or the knowledge of their parents? We may, perhaps, quote the answer to the last question. After quoting authorities LIGUORI sums up in this way:—

"The conclusion to which we are led is that not only do sons, who become monks without consulting their parents, not sin, but ordinarily speaking, they make a grave mistake if they inform their parents of their vocation, because they thus expose themselves to the danger of being deflected from their purpose; and this conclusion is confirmed by the examples of countless saints whose departures without the knowledge and against the will of their parents, God even sanctioned by miracles and blessed."

This ruling, you must remember, applies to the case of boys above the age of fourteen years. Can we doubt that such casuistry also "makes void the word of God"?

But, you will say, the difficulties which the casuistry, Jewish and Christian, attempted to remove, remain, and the palpable failure of the casuists brings us no nearer to the solution of the problem, how to make the word of God an adequate rule for our guidance in the tangled ways of the world. To what conclusion would you lead us? Well, in the first place I would certainly emphasize our Saviour's repudiation of "the tradition of the elders." It is no slight advantage in the search for truth to be warned off the wrong paths. We may make up our minds on this point, viz., that we shall not solve the problem of moral obedience by putting our necks again under the yoke of official guidance. The casuistry of the rabbis, Christian not less than Jewish, may silence our

questionings but cannot answer them, and the inward calm which may be gained at the hands of official directors will be dearly bought by the enfeeblement of our self-respect.

Next, I would suggest that the key to the practical problem is disclosed in our Lord's words. Whatever decision you frame for yourself, or accept from others, at least make sure that it does not "make void the word of God." This is an unfailing test of casuistry. Does it really extend the principle of the divine commandment, and not restrict or set it aside? Does it make God's word more effectively your guide in life? or does it throw that word to a greater distance from actual conduct? Does it fill the commandment with new relevancy and richer significance? or does it empty it of practical value?

These questions must be asked with respect to every tradition which is offered for our guidance, and to every precedent which the records of Christian living can produce. By asking them we are able to distinguish between the true witness of the past and the false, and we gain strength and guidance for the solemn work of self-direction to which, as Christians, we are called.

Yes, we come back finally to that fact of personal responsibility — complete, inalienable, continuing — which is the basis of Christian morality, the vindication of which is the singular glory of the Christian religion. In the last resort you must determine your own course, be your own casuist, govern yourself. You are the captain on your ship as it takes its perilous course over the ocean of life, and for your guidance there is the

chart on board and the pilot stars above. The metaphor fails, for when the Christian speaks of self-direction he is thinking of that surrendered and transfigured self, which has become the instrument of the Spirit of God. "If any man be in Christ," says S. PAUL, "he is a new creature." There is within the Christian a divine Monitor, who will solve his doubts. "If ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under the law." And the supreme grace of this inward guidance lies in the marvel and mystery of its reverence for the spirit of man. Only in the terms of extravagant paradox can the solemn and familiar facts of the spiritual life be told. "I have been crucified with Christ," cries the apostle, "yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ in me." The same paradox, thus passionately confessed by the great mystic, is more coldly uttered in the deliberate verse of WORDSWORTH, when in his solemn invocation of duty he includes the prayer for grace of self-direction:—

> "Yet not the less would I throughout
> Still act according to the voice
> Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
> That my submissiveness was choice—
> Not seeking in the school of pride
> For 'precepts over dignified,'
> Denial and restraint I prize
> No farther than they breed a second will more wise."

That "second will" is the creation of the Spirit of God; and to possess it is to have solved the problem of casuistry, and gained at last moral independence.

XII

RABBINISM AND FRATERNITY[1]

BUT BE NOT YE CALLED RABBI: FOR ONE IS YOUR TEACHER, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.—S. MATTHEW xxiii. 8.

1. THESE words form part of a very striking discourse of Christ, briefly summarized in the gospels of S. MARK and S. LUKE, and more fully reported in the gospel of S. MATTHEW. Our Saviour, as the end of His public ministry drew near, came into public conflict with the religious leaders of His nation, and openly rebuked their personal and official misdeeds. He drew a contrast between them and their system on the one hand, and His disciples and the system which would inevitably come in due course to be theirs, on the other. This contrast perhaps adds a distinctive importance to the actual admonitions, because it prohibits us from generalizing them unduly, and requires us to read them as properly designed to teach the truth about Christianity, as the ordained successor to the religion of Israel. The church of Moses was to pass away: the Church of Christ was to take its place. What was to be the relation of the one to the other? How far was the new religious society built on the acknowledgment of

[1] Preached on the 7th Sunday after Trinity, July 17, 1904, in S. Margaret's, Westminster.

Christ's Messiahship to reproduce the familiar features of the Church which had lost its *raison d'être* with the Messiah's advent? It is important to remember that our Saviour emphatically recognized the authority of the Jewish Church at the time. He begins His great indictment of the leaders of its hierarchy with a solemn recognition of their spiritual claims; it is, indeed, not the least count in that indictment that they contradicted by their practice the main substance of their official witness. "Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.'" Our Lord goes on to describe the hypocrisy of the current system of morals, the ostentation and love of social prominence of the religious leaders, and, as evidencing these tempers, their delight "in the salutations in the market-places, and to be called of men, rabbi." Then He turns to His disciples, and charges them not in their turn to reproduce these familiar characteristics of men in office. "But be not ye called rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even the Christ." He adds to these striking contrasts some words which would seem to have been often on His lips, as they appear in various connections in the records of His life. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled: and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."

2. You will observe that Christ offers reasons for His prohibitions which throw light on their character and range. We cannot be mistaken in thinking that there is something more in them than a solemn warning against ostentation and social ambition. Warnings against such faults are the commonplaces of ethical teaching, and we could find many of them in the writings of the rabbis themselves. It needed not to emphasize the sole teachership of Christ, and the new relationship of fraternity which must necessarily grow up among His disciples, if all that was intended was a condemnation of a familiar and universally censured fault. Moreover, it is to be remembered that, at this stage in His ministry, our Saviour had clearly announced His purpose of founding a Church, and had indicated the general plan of its domestic discipline. He had evidently appointed in the apostles persons who were, to all intents and purposes, authorized officials; and we may add that those apostles had but too plainly shown how thoroughly they appreciated that aspect of their position. The sons of Zebedee had asked for themselves the chief places in the kingdom, and their request had moved the other apostles to an indignation equally natural and suggestive. As then, Christ, in rebuking the ambition of His followers, had disallowed the conventional notion of office which underlay it, so here, in warning them against the notorious faults of the Jewish hierarchy, He seems to be disallowing the conventional notion of spiritual office which those faults implied. I submit, therefore, that we are to find in the text, not merely a warning against certain defects of character, but also a luminous teaching about the

Christian society itself. The fundamental character of the Catholic Church, the nature of its mystic unity, the limits of official authority within it, the conditions under which officials exist and bear rule among its members, are outlined in the threefold contrast which our Saviour draws between the scribes and Pharisees and His disciples. We may observe in passing that it would appear to be self-evident that there is no question of a literal understanding of Christ's words, as if He, in the spirit of an extravagant and impracticable theorist, were prohibiting the use within His Church of distinctive and honorific titles. It is on record that He Himself designated the twelve disciples as apostles, and, within that chosen company, allotted to S. PETER a precedence, and to JUDAS ISCARIOT an important and responsible duty. The famous objection of the Quakers to allow or to use the current titles of respect does not really deserve serious discussion, and has never, so far as I can appraise the history of those interesting enthusiasts, brought to them anything but unnecessary misconception and unmerited obloquy. We need not spend time in justifying our repudiation of an interpretation, which no rational student of the New Testament could for one moment allow. We may certainly find more in Christ's words than the most futile of positive rules.

3. "But be not ye called rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ." What are we to understand by these words? What would the disciples have understood them to mean? What can we, reading them with

the commentary of Christian experience to elucidate their meaning, see that they did mean ? These are the questions to which we must address ourselves. Rabbi, teacher, master were titles in current use among the Jews, and bearing substantially the same meaning : they were of recent application to the scribes who, in the last age of the national history, had attained to a paramount position. These scribes, or—as they are also styled in the New Testament " lawyers "—were a class of learned specialists, who may be said to have monopolized the study of the scriptures. Their prominence indicated the supreme importance attached to the written law among the later Jews.

" The higher the law rose in the estimation of the people, the more did its study and exposition become an independent business . . . An independent class of 'biblical scholars or scribes,' *i.e.*, of men who made acquaintance with the law a profession, was formed beside the priests. And when in the time of Hellenism, the priests, at least those of the higher strata, often applied themselves to heathen culture, and more or less neglected the law of their fathers, the scribes ever appeared in a relative contrast to the priests. It was no longer the priests, but the scribes, who were the jealous guardians of the law. Hence they were also from that time onwards the real teachers of the people, over whose spiritual life they bore complete sway. . . . In the time of the New Testament we find this process fully completed ; the scribes then formed a firmly compacted class in undisputed possession of a spiritual supremacy over the people."

These scribes or rabbis were the casuists of their time, and their decisions were accumulated into a vast body of authoritative dicta, which was carefully transmitted, and continually added to. They exacted from their pupils the utmost deference and subjection. " Respect for a teacher, it was said, should exceed respect for a father, for both father and son owe respect to a teacher." They were the most thorough-going of traditionalists.

"A pupil," says SCHÜRER, "had only two duties. One was to keep everything faithfully in memory. . . . The second duty was never to teach anything otherwise than it had been delivered to him. Even in expression he was to confine himself to the words of his teacher. . . . It was the highest praise of a pupil to be 'like a well lined with lime, which loses not one drop.'"[1]

The disciples, then, could not but have understood from their Master's words that, within the society of Christ's disciples, there was to be nothing corresponding to the rabbis, and their didactic method. Teachers indeed there would be, but not such teachers. The criterion of truth within the Church was not to be some honoured teacher's exactly recorded dicta, but the Spirit of the Teacher of teachers abiding in the hearts of His disciples. Instead of a succession of Christian rabbis, whose tradition, transmitted and enriched through the ages, should be the final authority on all religious questions, there should be an unfailing presence of Christ in the Church. Christian teachers would retain the character of witnesses, with which they started: their *raison d'être* would be to bring into the life of the Church, as the supreme principle of all Christian procedures, the fact of Christ's real presence with His people. "We preach not ourselves," said S. PAUL, speaking in the name of all Christian ministers who are truly such, "but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." You observe that our Saviour bases His prohibition of Christian rabbinism on two facts: His own supremacy and the fraternity of disciples. "One is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." It is evident that He held the rabbinic position to be inconsistent with His own supremacy.

[1] "History of the Jewish People," II., i., p. 312 f.

Of the scribes, who professed themselves beyond all others the guardians and exponents of the divine law, He said that they made void the word of God by their tradition. How often have His words been echoed since by His disciples, and applied with obvious fitness to those who pass among their fellows for His professed representatives! There was reasonableness in the orthodox accusation, often pressed by the fathers of the Church in the primitive ages, that the heretics, in adopting descriptions formed from the names of the heresiarchs whom they followed, were demonstrating their disloyalty to Christ Himself; but the time came when, under the plea of a rigorous loyalty to Christ, the orthodox outdid all heretics in their contempt for the Founder's authority. In truth the danger of an irrational traditionalism, *i.e.*, the tendency to exalt Christian teachers into a position of rabbinic authority; the habit of seeing our belief through the eyes of others, and disguising mental indolence and moral obtuseness under the fair-seeming masque of a religious deference to the great teachers of the past—fathers, schoolmen, reformers, founders and leaders of religious movements, is never far from Christian folk. RICHARD HOOKER, in the preface to the "Ecclesiastical Polity," made a protest against the excessive authority ascribed by the Puritans of that age to CALVIN, and compared it with the regard paid by Roman Catholics to PETER LOMBARD.

"Of what account," he said, "the Master of Sentences was in the Church of Rome, the same and more amongst the preachers of reformed churches CALVIN had purchased; so that the perfectest divines were judged they which were skilfullest in CALVIN'S

writings. His books almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by." [1]

The great Anglican's protest may well be remembered now when, in spite of ourselves, we are required to face new issues, and to make our account with new situations.

"Be not ye called rabbi" says Christ, "for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." The Christian teacher is no ordained rabbi guarding a tradition of authoritative teaching, and adding to it his own dicta, binding both on the Church, but always only a disciple charged to help his brethren, and appointed to that service. The famous Puritan appeal to the Pilgrim Fathers, which often from this pulpit I have read to you and made my own, has the true ring of the Christian pastorate:

"I charge you"—said ROBINSON to his disciples ere they set sail for America on their memorable venture—

"I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveal anything to you, by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His holy word."

These manly and modest words seem to reflect the very teaching of our Lord. "Be not ye called rabbi; for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." How is it—we cannot help asking—that, in spite of teachings so clear and so explicit, the Christian Church has, beyond all question, reproduced with impressive exactness the phenomena of that rabbinism which Christ prohibited,

[1] *Vide* "Works," Vol. I., p. 173, ed. Keble.

and this not occasionally but constantly, not locally but universally? We must answer that when fraternity failed among Christians, the true and only effective check on rabbinism ceased to operate, and the course was clear for the normal developments of professionalism. The rabbinic pretensions of Christian teachers have their strength, and to some extent their excuse, in the practical disappearance of the true conception of the Christian Church as the family of God. "All ye are brethren," said Christ to His disciples, and, indeed, the tender designation has lingered in the sanctuary even to the present hour; but of fraternity among Christians as such, judge you, who know yourselves and the world about you, how much survives beyond the phrases? Loss of fraternity has involved loss of religious interest, and in due course lack of religious knowledge. Forgive me, if I speak more directly of the case of the Church of England, the most decorous and the least fraternal of all Christian churches. Our Anglican laity seem to be acquiescing easily in their exclusion from doctrinal discussions: they will leave theology to the clergy, they say, and indeed, they know too little about the questions in debate to make their entrance into it serviceable. So the sinful apathy and self-imposed ignorance are decently screened from detection by the appearances of a reasonable modesty. There is good reason for dwelling on these matters at this time. In certain quarters there is great activity and enthusiasm directed towards a reorganization of the national Church, designed to remove the many anomalies of the present system, and to conform it to the normal type of an autonomous denomination. On that project I desire

to pass no opinion save this: that in the present state of religious indifference among the laity, the most favourable condition conceivable is provided for the triumph of the rabbinical spirit among us. The Church of England wants—never more than now—the sane, just, reasonable attitude of mind, which specialism and spiritual office, for quite intelligible reasons, do not tend to develop, and which a religious laity, interested in religion, instructed in their faith, accustomed to think freely and to speak frankly, would seem peculiarly well suited to provide. Church reorganization in the existing state of feeling can hardly fail to be mischievous; in an atmosphere of fraternity in which the Lordship of the living Christ was realized and, as flowing from that fundamental fact, the true spiritual equality of all disciples was frankly admitted, the reorganization of the Church of England might be as life from the dead. "We know," said S. JOHN, "that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." "One is your teacher" says the Lord, "and all ye are brethren."

XIII

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH[1]

THERE IS ONE BODY, AND ONE SPIRIT, EVEN AS ALSO YE WERE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS OVER ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN ALL.—EPHESIANS iv. 4.

1. By an unusual coincidence these words are pressed on our attention to-day in a very special degree, for they form part of the second lesson, and are read again in the epistle for the day. The English preacher is not required, as his Lutheran brother, to take the text of his sermon from the epistle or gospel for the day, but the advantages of connecting the preaching with the lections of scripture are so evident and strong, that a very general voluntary practice of doing so has grown up among us. I shall follow the Lutheran rule and the Anglican custom this morning with the more willingness since the subject brought before us is one always greatly important, and at the present time of manifest and considerable urgency. The unity of the Church of Christ, its nature, evidence, and effect, the causes which have obscured it, and the obligations which it entails on the individual Christian, these are themes of so much interest and importance, and have been so

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 17th Sunday after Trinity, October 3, 1909.

eagerly debated in the past, and are so much discussed at present, that it may well seem a venturous and even futile project to gather them into the subject of a short sermon ; nevertheless, I shall hope to be able, with the assistance of your close attention, to indicate so much as will suffice for our thinking to-day.

2. It might pass without argument that if Christianity be truly a religion, then there must be some invariable signs which always and everywhere are observable in its professors, by which they can be securely identified, and apart from which they cannot be acknowledged to have any right to be regarded as Christians. This is certainly true of every other religion ; it cannot but be also true of the religion of Christ. What are those invariable and unerring signs ? How can we be sure that we are ourselves entitled to bear the "honourable name" of Christian ? and how shall the non-Christian world be able to identify us ? I do not think it is worth while to distinguish between the two inquiries, that which determines our own right, and that which determines our recognition by others, for it may be taken for granted that we shall all agree that the hypocritical claimant to the Christian name may be left out of count. He may, indeed, impose on himself, and he may for awhile impose on others, but this imposition is rarely unsuspected, and need not engage us now. We wish to know what are the marks of a genuine Christian, and the non-Christian world wishes the same.

3. The form in which these inquiries have come down to us is that which we know so well in religious controversy. What are the marks or notes of the true

Church? Every denomination has perforce to strike out for itself some definition of the Church which shall at once satisfy the reason and justify the practice of its members. These definitions, however, are always *ex post facto* descriptions, and have their explanations rather in the circumstances than in the minds of those who make them. Their interest and importance is rather apologetic than didactic. Accordingly, we do not obtain much help from them. It is as if we were asked to accept as a definition of a river some description of it which happened to be true of a particular river at a particular time and place. A river is a political boundary, or a highway of commerce, or a necessity of agriculture, or an object of religious veneration. Every one of these is descriptive of some particular river, but none of them is necessarily true of any. What would be thought of the man who offered any or all of them as defining what a river is? This may seem an extravagant illustration, yet it is the simple truth, that the formal definitions of the Church of Christ present precisely the same confusion of essence and attributes, the same identification of permanent and variable factors. So, then, when we would know what are the marks of the Christian Church, we must be vigilant against this error; and, therefore, we must be careful to mount the stream of history until we get past the distractions of ecclesiastical conflict, and have reached the sources in the New Testament. Our definition of the Church must be taken from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and our criterion of Christianity must be discovered nowhere else. Christian experience, which in certain directions

may be fairly said to have found expression in ecclesiastical history, will provide the tests of the theory which from the New Testament we shall have framed. There we shall find the actual applications of the teaching of the Lord and His apostles, and we shall marvel at the immense and bewildering perversions of the primitive gospel.

4. The first and perhaps the most important contrast between the unity of the Church as declared or implied in the New Testament, and that unity as defined by the churches from time to time, is that which most easily eludes the modern inquirer. We may state it in many ways, but for my present purpose it may suffice to say that whereas the New Testament makes ecclesiastical membership grow out of a spiritual relationship to Christ, the churches have mostly reversed that order, and now make spiritual relationship to Christ grow out of ecclesiastical membership.

Christ called men to be his disciples, and then taught them that as His disciples they were linked together as brethren. The unity of the "flock" depended on, and was involved in the unity of the "shepherd": in following Him, they were drawn together, and set to walk in one direction. The metaphor of course failed to convey the full teaching, for sheep follow a shepherd in the simplest way, without understanding or sharing his intentions, and nowise having any sympathy with his purpose; but disciples follow their teacher precisely because they are dimly discerning his objects, and entering sympathetically into his mind; and their obedience involves an advance in knowledge, and a progressive conformity. "One is your teacher, even the

Christ ; and all ye are brethren." Fraternity is latent in discipleship, and must reveal itself in presence of disciples; for discipleship implies a true moral congruity with Christ, and finds itself naturally drawn towards the "mind of Christ" in every Christian. Accordingly it has been ever observed, that the better Christians rise above their ecclesiastical theories, and in spite of them recognize, even in those whom theory pronounces accursed, a common Christianity of sincere discipleship which makes them spiritually one with themselves. There is a pleasing story of the conduct of a Roman Catholic priest in Ireland who, when the saintly Protestant Bishop of Kilmore, WILLIAM BEDELL, was buried in 1642, attended the funeral, and exclaimed, "O that my spirit might be with his!" Even the fierce conflicts of that cruel age, and the immediate inflammations which then made life in Ireland almost unendurable, could not destroy the witness of his spirit to the essential Christianity of an alien and a heretic. The scandalous combination of fraternal language and persecuting violence, which has marked the record of the Christian Church from the first, is not altogether to be explained as an evidence of extreme and almost grotesque hypocrisy, but rather discloses the helplessness of good men, distracted by a conflict between their rigorous theories and their insistent convictions, between the supposed demands of right belief and the clear testimony of the Christian conscience.

5. The New Testament not only makes discipleship the basis of ecclesiastical membership, but teaches that ecclesiastical membership is implicitly in discipleship. In the great and continuing conflict between the

conceptions of Christianity, which might be conveniently called respectively Catholic and Protestant, though they are really coæval with the Christian Church, the truth seems to lie with neither, or rather to be partially held by both. The Catholic is wrong in placing the essence of Christianity in an ecclesiastical membership. The order of history is the order of spiritual experience always, first that personal relationship towards the Lord which makes men disciples, next that confession of it which labels men as members of the Christian society. It is only by a charitable fiction that the unconscious infant, or the unconverted professor, is styled a Christian. We hope that in process of time discipleship will pour reality into the infant's Christian claim, and transform the professor's religion from a barren pretence to a living faith, but we may not deceive ourselves as to the present unreality of both. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The Protestant, hardly less disastrously, tends to forget that though discipleship and ecclesiastical membership may be severed, yet the normal and all but inevitable implication of discipleship is membership of the visible society of Christians, and that few more spiritually perilous situations can be imagined than that in which the disciple attempts to live in isolation from his fellow believers.

6. Discipleship, in point of fact, uttering itself spontaneously in fraternity, created a visible and organized society. The "brethren" for their mutual edification, and for the fulfilment of their common obligation as "disciples" to evangelize mankind, constructed a system of religious government, which became to them

the symbol of their unity as well as the ordinary instrument of their witness. But these descriptions were merged in a higher character. The New Testament teaches plainly that the united action of the first believers was inspired by the Spirit of God, that His will was disclosed by their decisions, that His power went along with their efforts. The emergence of the Christian society on to the arena of history is represented as accompanied by conspicuous, amazing, and effectual tokens of the divine approbation; and the Day of Pentecost, which witnessed the birth of the Church, is celebrated as the festival of the Holy Spirit. The abolition of those natural and historic distinctions, which are the occasions and entrenchments of human separatism, was stamped on the Christian society from the first. Whatever unity that was which should hold together the followers of Christ, would not be identical with the familiar unities of experience. National privilege lost its meaning when men heard in their own tongues "the mighty works of God." Sacerdotalism, the sacred rights of hierarchies, perished when the whole company of 120 disciples, apostles and humbler followers of the Lord, men and women together, "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Christian Church, according to the New Testament, is a society of disciples, inspired by the Holy Spirit, organized for edification and witness, forming a genuine democracy, and having within it no priestly class.

7. In the New Testament we may see how difficult it was to maintain this conception of the Church against

the deeply ingrained notions of the age. S. Paul had to do battle with the nationalist prejudice of the Jews, and the superstition of the Gentiles. This epistle to the Ephesians is a noble exposition of the unity of the Church against the former. The gist of the argument is in the contrast between the state of the world before and since the mission of Christ. Between the chosen race and the rest of mankind there had been the barrier of an exclusive religious claim. The privilege of Israel was forced with a crude emphasis and a cruel insistence on the notice of every one who approached the central shrine of Israel's worship. No less a penalty than death was pronounced on the Gentile who should venture to cross from the outer to the inner court of the temple, from the place reserved for the religious Gentile to that which belonged to the born Israelite. "But now," writes the apostle, "in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ, for He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition . . . that He might create in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and He came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through Him we both have our access in one spirit unto the Father." There is a subtle interplay of suggestions in the use of the word "body," for sometimes the thought is that of the unifying energy of the divine Spirit within the Church, which the apostle compares to the vital unity of organic life uttering itself in manifoldness of physical structure and variety of

natural function, and sometimes the thought rests on that crucified body of the Lord, nailed to the cross of Calvary, which was the historic instrument by which the deeper unity of the spirit had been revealed to men, and through which as by a supreme and conquering force the ancient strifes of the world were being hushed into tranquillity. The body of humiliation in which the Redeemer "became a curse for us," and "the body of His glory," to which the faithful look to be finally "conformed," are scarcely distinguished in the argument from that mystical "body" of Christ into which all Christians are baptized. We do not rightly take the meaning of the apostle unless we carry into our reading of his words all these separate but related senses.

8. Finally, the New Testament teaches us that the Holy Communion is designed to express and secure the unity of the body. There is, for intelligible reasons, very little sacramental teaching in the New Testament, but this adds the greater importance to what teaching there is. It is mostly found in the first epistle to the Corinthians and there it is concerned with two points. S. Paul has to rebuke two misconceptions about the Lord's Supper. First, he tells the Corinthians that the receiving of the Holy Communion implies an exclusive religious allegiance, which utters itself pre-eminently in good living. Next, he tells them that the Lord's Supper is the divinely appointed symbol of fraternity, and is profaned by whatsoever conduct does violence to the fraternal relationship. Both lessons are by the apostle bound up with the aspect of the sacrament as a commemoration of the death of Christ, which may be said to be primary. The intermingling of suggestions in his

language is nowhere more evident, and we may add nowhere more important. When the apostle writes the solemn sentence which casts on us as we hear it so deep a shadow of anxiety—"He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body"—we must carry in our minds the triple suggestion of the crucifixion, which we commemorate, the life of divine glory which we acknowledge, the fellowship in the mystical body which we declare. Memory, worship, membership meet in the Holy Communion. Accordingly, the Church of England makes no parade of ecclesiastical claim when the Holy Communion is in question. It is "the Lord's Supper," not ours; and we cannot, we may not, banish from the Lord's table those who are indeed the Lord's.

9. On this thought we may fitly conclude a sermon which is to be followed by the Holy Communion. To the Lord's table it is my high privilege to invite the Lord's people, as such, banishing here from mind any lesser description, and praying them to realize what that description implies. In a distracted and selfish generation, which has lost sight of the greater visions of duty and destiny, and fills itself with the poor little sordid excitements of the hour, the Lord's people are they who are set on following One, who passed on the earth as a visionary and a martyr, and left behind Him no memorial save the cross, and its lessons. From the secular conflict, in which men strive for the bread which perisheth, and sell themselves for gain, the Lord's people draw aside "from the strife of tongues and the tumult of the city" to vindicate and renew their hold on the eternal things of the Spirit, for which

He bore witness even to death. Here we would seek for the power of the higher life, the life of faith which fulfils the paradox of the saints, who endured as "seeing Him who is invisible," and carries the conquering power of the risen Christ into the daily passion of the world. Here we would approach, as penitents, the throne of His mercy, who can forgive all because He knows all, and whose right to absolve is built on His community with us in the mystery of temptation. Here we would find again the lost connections of the Spirit, and weave anew the broken links of charity, because here nought may come between us and Him; and His love supremely shown on Calvary can bear upon us with fresh power in this commemoration, and "constrain us" to the life of love. For here, surely, He fulfils His pledge that "where two or three are gathered together in His name He is in the midst of them," and here "in His presence there is fulness of joy."

"Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again."

XIV

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT[1]

GIVING DILIGENCE TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.—EPHESIANS iv. 3.

THE Christian Church did not recognize distinctions of race, but the unity of races within the household of faith was not easily secured, or maintained without effort. Privilege dies hard, and religious privilege hardest of all. The New Testament discloses a period of conflict in which the most impressive and heroic figure is that of S. PAUL, and the subject of strife was precisely the survival of Jewish privileges in the Christian Church. Thus, we are to keep this reference before our minds when we read of unity in S. PAUL's epistles. He is ever thinking first of that equality of nationalities which offended his believing countrymen so deeply, and which was to him the great "mystery" of divine grace.

We may observe a singular fitness in the description of such unity as in a special sense the work of the Holy Spirit. Historically it was nothing else. The cancelling of Jewish privilege had been brought home to the Jewish apostles by the outpouring on all disciples,

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 17th Sunday after Trinity, October 3, 1909.

Gentles no less than Jews, of the gifts of the Spirit. This was the argument which convinced S. PETER that Gentiles were fit subjects for Christian baptism. "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" asked the reverent and candid apostle when he heard CORNELIUS and his friends "speak with tongues and magnify God." The unity of Jews and Gentiles within the "one body" of the Christian Church was "the unity of the Spirit," for only the visible action of the Holy Ghost had secured its recognition. But there is a deeper sense of the phrase. What is the unifying principle in the various crowd of disciples, differing so widely in race, language, degree of civilization, inherited customs, natural aptitude? All these distinctions unquestionably continue, and find expression within the Church. They retain so much vigour there that the most earnest and long-continued efforts of Church rulers to extinguish them meet with very little success. The distracted and divided state of Christendom after so many centuries proves the strength of the old natural divisions. External systems of faith and order are too weak to crush out nationality and temperament. These mould the religion which they accept almost as much as the religion moulds them. It is a curiously suggestive fact that the Reformation of the sixteenth century mainly followed the line of Roman civilization. Outside the Roman empire, in the Teutonic and Scandinavian countries, Protestantism prevailed; inside the Roman empire, among the Latins and Celts, the Roman Church held its own.

It is manifest that there is a real connection between

the races and the forms of Christianity which they adopt. Similarly in the Teutonic world, and notably in the Anglo-Saxon dispersion, there is an apparent connection between the denominations and the social grades of the people. There must be some strong and subtle affinity between the religious system and the mental aptitudes of the social grade which affects it. We might push the same inquiry into the case of individuals. Natural temperament is not extinguished or transfigured by Christianity. Individuals retain their preferences, and seek edification in different ways according to the type of their minds and the custom of their lives. Clearly then there must be some unifying principle which can persist through all varieties of nationality, social type, and individual description, if the Christian Church which presents so bewildering a variety can really be said to have any true unity at all.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians S. Paul speaks at some length of the Christian society under the metaphor, which he had borrowed from the stoics, of the human body. His point was that diversity is not only not inconsistent with unity, but even ministers to it. The unity of the physical body does not consist in an absence of all distinctiveness of function and variety of parts, but in a common life which circulates throughout the whole enabling all functions and vitalizing all parts. From this natural and salutary co-operation and co-ordination of parts are derived the beauty and serviceableness of the whole. A conflict of interests or a rivalry of functions is absurd. "God tempered the body together, that there should be no

schism in the body: but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it: or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." The vitalizing principle of the body of Christ, its diffused life, is the Holy Spirit—"For in one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free: and were all made to drink of one spirit." It is impossible, I think, not to recognize in the last phrase a reference to the Holy Communion. The two sacraments are the visible channels through which this divine life is ever passing into the Christian society.

There is little danger for most of us in the old devotion to national religious privilege, for no modern nation can pretend to any respectable title to exceptional advantages by divine appointment, as the Jews in the time of S. PAUL were able to do. I am not indeed quite sure whether there is not a recrudescence of this privileged temper in the language one sometimes hears on the subject of foreign missions, language which seems to imply that those who use it think that Christ's religion is a peculiar possession of the white races, and should not be carried to the other races of mankind; but I apprehend that most of those, who allow themselves to speak thus slightingly of missions to the Asiatics and Africans, do not think very deeply, and would perhaps be surprised if they were able to perceive the true meaning of what they say. Nor, perhaps, are most English people much disposed to adopt exclusive ecclesiastical doctrines, for indeed in view of our

religious history, and the actual circumstances of religion among us, such doctrines have an arbitrary and even grotesque appearance.

There is, however, grave danger that we shall fall into the schismatical temper by an exaggerated devotion to our own denomination; and, while verbally acknowledging the common Christianity of all the denominations—an acknowledgment which is easily made when it is intended to lead to no practical results—shall practically live as if our denomination were the whole Church of Christ. The multiplication of denominations is not perhaps necessarily incompatible with a true recognition of the "unity of the Spirit," but certainly it makes that recognition immensely more difficult, and induces many evils of magnitude. The waste of resources, the degradation of religious methods by the stringent coercion of financial exigency, the scandal of denominational rivalry, the stumbling-block created by the unlovely spectacle of chronic Christian controversy—all these are consequences of that multiplication of denominations which is the salient feature of religion in the English-speaking world. Apart altogether, then, from any ecclesiastical theory, and conceding the right of the individual to push his private judgment to the utmost which reason could demand or charity permit, we may point to these results of denominationalism as raising a very urgent and solemn question for the disciple of Christ, who, whatever his denominational description may be, believes that he is before all things bound "to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The phrase of S. Paul—"Giving diligence to keep"

—suggests that the task will not always be easy. There are factors of human nature itself which are unfriendly to "the unity of the Spirit," and we shall often find ourselves tempted to break away from the fellowship of our brethren. We all like to have our own way in the Church, as elsewhere; yet it is never rightly possible for us to have everything as we like; and often our own way is not the way of justice, or wisdom, or charity. Self-suppression is more often than not the demand of duty; self-assertion is never unbiassed, and often is disastrously selfish. The middle way between a cowardly complaisance and a disinterested independence is often hard to find, and always hard to keep. It is easy to go with the multitude; easy, albeit perhaps not so easy, to go one's own way. "To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is never easy.

The apostle in the context indicates the modes by which the Christian shall be able to carry out his difficult duty. As is his custom when deeply moved, he casts his exhortation into the form of a pathetic personal appeal: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

He sets in their true order three considerations which the Christian is to keep in mind, and by which he is to determine his conduct. First, he is to think of his duty to his Master; next, he is to take account of his own faults; finally, he is to consider the claim which his brethren in Christ have upon him. Then he is to bring

all these into relation with his action as a member of the "one body." With these held steadily in mind he is not likely to be servile; he cannot be arrogant; he dare not be schismatical. Let us pursue these thoughts a little further. Our first duty is to Christ, whose name we bear. No considerations of personal interest, no demands of ecclesiastical authority can be rightly placed in competition with His claim upon our obedience. The stern words of absolute and exclusive right which stand on record in the gospel have an abiding validity, which we may never forget: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." This primary right of the Master to the disciple's obedience will be universally allowed, but the inevitable question, How is that right expressed? will be variously answered. Where may we learn Christ's will in order that we may fulfil it? Has He delegated His authority to any terrestrial authority? Has He set forth His laws in any book? There are many Christians who will return a ready affirmative answer to one or other of these questions. Obey the Church and you obey Christ, says the Roman Catholic. Obey the Bible and you obey Christ, says the Protestant. But what if the Church command that which outrages the conscience, or does violence to reason? What if the Bible seem erroneous or self-contradictory? Good men in the past have been confronted with both these contingencies, and truly the problem of the Christian's duty is so difficult, because neither Church nor Bible has been able to sustain the character of the divinely appointed exponent of Christ's will for the individual believer's

guidance. Both the Church and the Bible must justify themselves to the Christian's conscience before they can serve to him for voices of Christ; and the Christian's conscience is not an unassisted or uninspired conscience, but a conscience which has been trained in the school of Christ, and is responsive to the approaches of the Holy Spirit. S. PAUL makes all turn on this divine co-operation: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The claim of Christ is finally certified to the Christian by his own conscience; and that inward monitor will be trustworthy if it be—what truly it is ordained to be—the ear of the soul, to which the voice of the Spirit can speak, and by which that voice can be heard.

"Show thou me the way that I should walk in for I lift up my soul unto Thee"—that is the Christian's prayer every day of his life; and if he do but live in the temper of his prayer, he will surely be ready to meet the crises of his life, those moments when he must take a decision of importance, perhaps must decide whether he shall resist the authority of the Church, which speaks, and rightly speaks, in Christ's name. "We must obey God rather than men," said S. PETER to the supreme ecclesiastical authority of his nation, clothing the verdict of his own conscience with the supreme and absolute authority of God Himself. That declaration stands in the record of mankind as the revelation and vindication of the human conscience. The very mention of conscience makes the thoughtful student of human life shake his head. What follies and crimes, have been excused by that plea! "I believe," said SOUTH, preaching in West-

minster Abbey on November 5, 1663, "upon a due survey of history it will be found, that the most considerable villainies which were ever acted upon the stage of Christendom, have been authorized with the glistering pretences of conscience and the introduction of a greater purity in religion."[1] There is too much truth in the great orator's words; and therefore there is the greater need of that "lowliness and meekness with longsuffering" to which S. PAUL calls us. A humble estimate of ourselves will be the best protection against the danger that a sinful self-assertion shall masquerade under the name of conscience. When we have rigorously canvassed our own qualifications for the task to which we are disposed to put our hands, we shall be little disposed to be as the fools "who rush in where angels fear to tread." Add the consideration of others' claims upon us, "forbearing one another in love," and we reduce to vanishing point the risks of self-delusion. Loyalty to Christ speaking within our consciences, self-judgment, honest and flattering, a fraternal regard for our fellow Christians—do but combine these, and you will surely "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

It may indeed be the case that even so we shall make mistakes; for God has not willed to release even goodness and sincerity from the limitations of nature and the disadvantages of circumstance; but we shall be preserved from sin, and even our mistakes will be made serviceable to the divine purpose in our lives. "If the readiness is there it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not."

[1] *Vide* "Works," iii., p. 189.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God," said our Master; and, if indeed we would "walk worthily of the calling wherewith we are called," we must seek to possess that beatitude. The opportunities of peacemaking are never far to seek in such a world of strife as this. We need not go outside our own houses for them. Within the family circle there is need, often tragic need, of the "peacemaker." The home, which should be the scene of love and service, "a little church" as S. CHRYSOSTOM called it, where the Father in Heaven is worshipped with the daily oblations of domestic affection and self-denial, too often is a school of mutual hatred, from which men and women go out into the world with hard faces and bitter hearts. In that school the evil lessons of schism are learned, which bear their calamitous fruit later in the nation, and in the Church. Let the spirit of love, the peace of Christ which passeth all understanding, reign in the home, and its blessed influence cannot be therein confined. It will pass out into the world with every member of that loving household, and tell for good on a wide, and ever widening, area of social life. This service to Christ, this contribution to the peace of His Church, this effort to hasten His kingdom, we all have it in our power to render. None is too old, too young, too ignorant, too simple for this most holy work. Christ's beatitudes, like the blessed gifts of nature, are within the reach of all, for all can "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

XV

THE BIBLE[1]

AND DAVID SAID, THERE IS NONE LIKE THAT; GIVE IT ME.
I SAMUEL XXI. 9.

DAVID was a fugitive in peril of his life, but the deadly hatred of King SAUL was as yet unsuspected by the people, who had long observed the conspicuous favour with which the king had treated him. Accordingly, when he came to the priests at Nob, and claimed their assistance in the king's name, he readily obtained his request. He was in desperate need both of food and weapons, and there was none of either with the priests save what was treasured within the sanctuary. The "holy bread" was freely given, and the sword of GOLIATH, symbol of a great deliverance, was offered. "The priest said, the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the Vale of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it: for there is none other save that here. And DAVID said, there is none like that: give it me."

The sword of Goliath waked memories in DAVID'S mind, and touched springs of faith and courage. It

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 2nd Sunday in Advent, December 6, 1908, in aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

was much more than a weapon of steel; it was a divine sacrament of strength and hope. The God who had sustained him in the heroic achievements of his youth would not fail him now. Here was the demonstration of Jehovah's power and goodwill; with that in his hands, he would not lose heart. We catch the ring of a deep emotion in the fugitive's words: "There is none like that: give it me."

I take leave to separate these words from their historical reference, and to apply them to the case for the Bible, which it is my duty to set before you to-day. "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God," writes S. Paul, and although he was not definitely referring to the Bible, he certainly would have included the Bible in a larger reference. There is risk of error in describing the Bible as itself "the word of God," but the description has ever commended itself to Christian people because in the Bible that divine utterance is treasured as nowhere else. In our time considerable importance attaches to the distinction between the statement that the Bible *contains* the word of God, which is true, and the statement that the Bible *is* the word of God, which is false. Misled by their own language, men have been carried to theories of inspiration and authority which are profoundly irrational, and have induced many disasters. The Bible has been clothed with a character to which it makes no claim, and which it assuredly does not possess. The scholars of our age have investigated the conditions of its composition, and the trustworthiness of its records. They have brought it into comparison with contemporary literature, and placed it alongside a whole library of

sacred writings. We see now that the books which make up the Bible are of very unequal merit. Some, like the writings of the greater prophets and psalmists, are admittedly the most precious religious possessions of mankind; others, like the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, do not apparently rise to the religious level of many uncanonical compositions. Others, again, like the historical books, present precisely the same characteristics as other historical books belonging to the same stages of literary development. Others, like the Books of Job and Jonah, appear to be of the nature of dramatical works designed with a moral. The sharp distinction which our Protestant forefathers drew between the canonical and the apocryphal books is seen to be arbitrary, and the list of apocryphal books included in the Roman Catholic canon is known to be defective. Some of the most important of these books—such, for instance, as most of those which are called apocalyptic—have only been recovered within recent years. All these circumstances have undoubtedly worked a change, I had almost said a revolution, in our notions about the Bible, and we need not be astonished that many good and devout Christians have been greatly alarmed, and disposed to refuse acceptance to the newer views which the critics and historians offer. This attitude of mind, however, is equally mistaken and unfortunate. It is mistaken, because in so far as the new views express facts which cannot be disputed, they are true views, and to reject them is to reject truth; it is unfortunate because it creates difficulties in the minds of men which need not be created, and sets the Bible forward with pretensions which cannot be sustained, the

failure of which goes far to indispose men to accord to the scriptures their rightful authority. Happily the Church of England has been ever distinguished by combining a high regard for the Bible with a singular moderation in its formal doctrine with respect to it. If you compare the two Anglican articles which treat of of holy scripture with the ten articles of the Westminster Confession, which deal with the same subject, you perceive at once the wide difference between the earlier and the later Protestant doctrine about the Bible. There is no definition of inspiration in the English formulary, and no attempt to indicate what precise version of scripture is inspired. In the Scotch formulary there is both.

"The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, and therefore authentical, so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them."

The Roman Catholic Church is in still worse plight, for the Council of Trent declared the Latin version, known as the Vulgate, to be itself inspired; and the late Pope in his encyclical on holy scripture, laid it down that "all the books without exception which the Church has received as sacred and canonical in all their parts have been written under the dictation of the Holy Ghost."

The happy moderation of the Thirty-nine Articles has had its effect. In the English Church since its reformation there has been an unfailing succession of

great divines, who have jealously guarded the Church against the danger of an irrational bibliolatry. At intervals there have been episodes of panic during which an outcry has been raised against biblical scholars, and even attempts have been made to brand them as heretics and drive them from the ministry of the national Church; but these episodes are as brief as they are violent, and within a short time the genuinely tolerant spirit of our Church reasserts itself. Nearly fifty years ago the religious public was wildly excited with a heresy trial. One of the contributors to the volume, "Essays and Reviews," Dr. ROWLAND WILLIAMS, was put on his trial by his bishop for having written the essay which, under the form of a review of BUNSEN'S "Biblical Researches," dealt with the inspiration and authority of the Bible. The most convincing part of his defence was that which appealed to the deliberate reticence of the English formulary, and to the large liberty actually claimed and exercised by the most illustrious and authoritative English divines. Sir JAMES STEPHEN'S great speech for the defence, which still deserves study by all who value English liberty and can appreciate virile reasoning, included a long catena of quotations from Anglican authorities, from HOOKER and CHILLINGWORTH to MILMAN, STANLEY, and WHATELY. There was, indeed, much excuse for the intolerance which prevailed in religious circles at that time, and which only the firm justice of the State restrained from actual persecution. The new views, with which we are familiar, were then as novel as they were disturbing. The panic was not limited to fanatical partisans, or to the mass of ignorant

believers. Liberal-minded churchmen like Archbishop TAIT and FREDERICK MAURICE were genuinely alarmed by the publication of critical conclusions which seemed to shake the very foundations of Christian belief. Yet there were even then wise and brave thinkers, who could imagine a time when the views then so repugnant should be seen to be not a weakness, but a strength to religion. Thus the brave and saintly CAMPBELL of Row wrote of COLENSO'S "Pentateuch" to his friend MAURICE :—

"I know little of historical criticism. In its present state it seems to have its chief value in being a peculiar and very searching trial of our faith. It may yet develop into an aid to faith. This I cannot doubt it must become if it ever attain to what it aspires to, viz., a true matter-of-fact restoration of the past. But at present it seems to be simply a trial to the faith held on higher grounds, with which its imperfect and fragmentary results are not seen to harmonize; doubtless only because they are imperfect and fragmentary. But what is as yet adverse to our faith, whatever it may become, is best met by laying the foundations of that faith more and more deep; or rather going down into its depths, and taking others with us to be comforted in seeing how it rests on the Rock of Ages."[1]

The faith which inspired such words has been abundantly justified. To-day the suspected and dreaded science of biblical criticism has become the armoury of the Christian apologist; and religion draws new strength from studies which scarcely half a century ago religious men almost unanimously denounced. A whole literature of devout criticism has come into existence, and is quickly replacing the older literature, exegetical and apologetic, which assumed pre-critical views of scripture. It were easy to name many admirable examples of this newer literature, which is the

[1] *Vide* "Life," ii., pp. 43—44.

tribute paid by science to faith ; but I will limit myself to a single book, as well for the excellence of its contents as for the authority of its author. Four years ago the present Bishop of Winchester published a small volume of addresses and sermons under the title, " On Holy Scripture and Criticism," which states clearly and persuasively the modern view of the Bible, and shows how that view, while it changes our beliefs about the Bible in many important particulars, confirms, and even deepens, the ancient conviction of the Church as to its divine authority and supreme value. We can take up our Bible to-day, when we are perplexed in faith or seeking some practical guidance for ourselves in the difficult situations of modern life, with the same restful confidence as breathed in the words of DAVID, when he took into his hands that famous and familiar weapon with which he had beheaded the giant of Gath, " There is none like that : give it me."

Let me indicate four reasons why this confident attitude can, nay must, be adopted with respect to the Bible by considering and candid men.

1. We now know, as our forefathers could not know, the superiority of the Bible among the sacred books of mankind. These books have been collected, edited with scholarly care, translated into English. We are able to set them beside our Bible and to institute a comparison between it and them. Does any serious doubt attach to the verdict which must be returned? It is, of course, the fashion in some quarters to speak in terms of large but vague admiration of the sacred books of the East, and to convey the impression that there really is little or nothing to choose between them and

the Christian scriptures; but I do not think that fashion commends itself to those who have actually studied those non-Christian books. Take for instance the confession of that eminent scholar, MAX MÜLLER, the editor of the great series of "The Sacred Books of the East," published by the Clarendon Press. He was the least likely man in the world to underestimate the excellence of those compositions which he took so much pains to bring to the knowledge of the English public, yet this is what he says in his editorial preface:

"I confess it has been for many years a problem to me, aye, and to a great extent is so still, how the sacred books of the East should, by the side of so much that is fresh, natural, simple, beautiful, and true, contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial, and silly, but even hideous and repellent."

In another place he uses very strong language about the Brahmanas, which form no small or unimportant part of the canonical Sanscrit literature of India:—

"These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots and the ravings of madmen. They will disclose to a thoughtful eye the ruins of faded grandeur; the memories of noble aspirations. But let us only try to translate these works into our own language, and we shall feel astonished that human language and human thought should ever have been used for such purposes."[1]

I have frankly admitted that the Bible stands in the same category with these sacred books. I do not deny or belittle the moral and spiritual treasures which they enshrine, or question the value of the religious service which they have rendered to mankind. But I submit as an incontrovertible proposition that the superiority of the Bible is so manifest on any just

[1] Quoted by Marcus Dods, "The Bible," p. 5.

comparison of its contents with theirs, that it is only by something like a culpable misuse of language that it and they can be spoken of without distinction. In the Bible we have the crown and flower of religious writing. It is the sacred book par excellence.

2. We are able to study the history of the Christian Church through a period of nearly nineteen centuries, and there are certain lessons which lie on the surface of that history so clearly that only carelessness or prejudice can miss them. One of those lessons is the intimate connection between ignorance of the Bible and ecclesiastical corruption. It is a sure sign of a corrupt church when it discourages Bible reading among its members; it is the best security for spiritual efficiency that the Bible should be known in the homes of the people, and be familiar to their minds. Again and again the reformation of religion has proceeded from the study of the Bible. The New Testament continues in the Church as the perpetual rebuke of those natural tendencies, hierarchical and sacerdotal, which transform for evil every religion, and find their most extreme expression in that religion which is of all religions the best.

3. While the past returns so decisive a verdict on the claim of the Bible, the testimony of the present is accordant and hardly less decisive. Within the century, since that great Revolution in France, which may be said to have inaugurated the modern world in which we live, many attempts have been made by thinkers and statesmen to discover some substitute for Christianity as the sanction of moral teaching, and, we may add, some substitute for the Bible as a manual of fundamental morality. Can it be said that those attempts

have been successful? Would it not be nearer the truth to say that thoughtful and patriotic men throughout the whole extent of western civilization are depressed and discouraged by the equal failure of non-religious and of sacerdotalist moral teaching, and are growing alarmed at the consequences of ignoring moral teaching altogether in their systems of public education? Here is a sentence from the "Report of an International Inquiry into Moral Instruction and Training in Schools," so admirably edited by Professor SADLER. This is the conclusion of an intelligent observer of the moral instruction in the State schools of France, and I incline to think that it will hold good if the area of investigation be extended to other countries, which have attempted the teaching of morality without religion:

"All moral instruction, given without the sanction of and appeal to more sacred claims than those of duty to the community or to self, is quite inadequate for its object, namely, the formation of individual character and the foundation of national virtue."[1]

The unique distinction of the Bible is its combination of the highest teaching with a series of historical illustrations which illumine that teaching, and make it "bite into" the mind. There is this further circumstance, that the Bible being the sacred book of the Christian Church is constantly kept in men's minds, so that the teaching of childhood is not suffered to fade away, but, at least in the case of a great number of citizens, is perpetually being renewed. When I speak thus generally of the Bible, I am greatly understating the strength of my argument; for the Bible contains

[1] Vol. II., p. 115.

the gospels, and these are not to be named with the rest of the scriptures, so superior are they in all that constitutes a manual of fundamental morality. I confess that when I reflect on all the bearings of the subject, it seems to me nothing short of political insanity for a nation such as our own to allow itself to be hustled by the quarrels of sects and parties into banishing from its schools this incomparable instrument of moral training. Nor can I bring myself to believe that the self-respect of the teachers will finally acquiesce in a conception of their noble profession, which would exclude from their concern the highest faculties and most enduring interests of the children they are set to teach. A low-toned trades-unionism introduced into the educational sphere, where trades-unionism at its best is wholly out of place, may for the time being lead them to advocate so degrading a policy, but reflection and experience cannot—I am sure they cannot—suffer so strange an error to continue. Whoever else insults the teachers and belittles their profession, let it not be themselves.

4. Lastly, there is the experience of individual Christians to the unique value of the Bible. A short time back a book was published which drew out in a pleasing and effective way the influence of the Psalms in human life. There are many other books of the Old Testament, and I think all the books of the New, which might be made the themes of similar compilations. The Christian Church has accumulated a vast devotional literature in the course of its long history, but who would exchange the whole of it for a single gospel? From all rivals the Christian turns to the Bible with a trust and love which never falter. "There is none like

that: give it me." Have you ever reflected on the wonderful variety of this testimony? Every type of manhood, every stage of culture, every degree of intelligence, every kind of condition, are expressed in the company of those who unite in testifying to the spiritual worth of the Bible. Thousands have found in some text of scripture the very oracle of Divine guidance which at the crisis of their lives they wanted. Thousands have been sustained, when every other earthly comfort failed them, by tender words of the Bible rising on the memory like the last gleams of a setting sun on a wintry scene, or whispered in the ear like a secret from a lover far away. "There is none like that: give it me," says the dying Christian bracing himself for the last conflict. "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The opening of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

But I must make an end. What I have said of the Bible properly bears on the appeal of the great society which is engaged in the translation, printing, and distribution of the scriptures. There can be no doubt in any Christian's, nay in any patriot's, mind as to the soundness of the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Missionaries from all parts of the mission field confess their dependence on it for the instruments of their evangelistic warfare. It brings cheap editions of the Bible within the reach of the poorest people. Thanks to its efforts the Bible is still the most popular of English books. It cannot be necessary for me to plead for a work so manifestly excellent. I leave this appeal in your hands with the assurance that you will contribute willingly and generously.

XVI

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY[1]

LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US, AS OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST, AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.—I CORINTHIANS iv. i.

S. PAUL has just affirmed that the ministry belongs to the Church, and is not to be exalted into a position of isolation and superiority. The text must be held closely to the preceding words. "Let no man glory in men," says the apostle to the keen partisans of Corinth, who were falling into factions under the names of the great apostolic leaders of the Church, and he adds the reason why such glorying in men was wrong and even absurd, "For all things are yours; whether PAUL, or APOLLOS, or CEPHAS, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." That is the fundamental truth which is to determine their estimate and treatment of Christian teachers, and which not less is, in the case of the teachers themselves, to shape the theory and govern the exercise of their ministry. Since the ministers belong to the Church, and the Church to Christ, the work of the ministers must be valued and judged solely in relation to Christ; since Christ

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 3rd Sunday in Advent, December 15, 1907.

belongs to God, the final verdict on those who are Christ's servants must be referred to the divine judgment.

"Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." "The object of the passage," said Dean STANLEY very justly, "is not to exalt, but to depreciate the teachers. They are only the humblest servants, not the representatives of Christ."[1] Perhaps we may say that the apostle desired both to exalt and to depreciate. He would disallow and disprove a false claim, in order to establish the rightful title of the Christian ministry. He repudiates "lordship over the faith" of the Corinthians, in order that he may bring the ministry under the grand principle of divinely ordained service. "Not that we have lordship over your faith," he writes in the second epistle, "but are helpers of your joy." It is not perhaps superfluous to point out that the postulate of the apostle's theory of the Christian ministry is fatal to every doctrine of ecclesiastical authority which separates the ministry from the society of believers, and seeks the voice of the Holy Spirit in the decisions of the clergy as such. The student of current theological literature will endorse the observation of the present bishop of Oxford: "Few words, perhaps, are used more loosely and uncertainly than the word Church; few words stand more often in sentences which men would have to reconsider and perhaps recast if they thought out definitely what they mean." It cannot be unfitting that English churchmen should be reminded that the 20th Article, which makes the much emphasized declaration that "the Church hath power to decree

[1] *Vide* "Corinthians," p. 73.

Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith," is preceded by the generally forgotten 19th Article which defines the Church as "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Nor is it without importance to remember that the 21st Article explicitly repudiates the favourite Gallican and Anglo-Catholic notion of the infallibility of general councils. It has been questioned whether the words of the text are properly applicable to every member of the Christian ministry, and whether they may be accepted as "a complete account of the functions of the Christian ministry." But it would seem evident that there is no real doubt as to the general range, and to the satisfying character, of the apostle's words. It is of course apparent that his immediate concern was with the actual situation in the Corinthian church, where parties were in process of being formed on the basis of a distinctive and professed preference for one or other of the apostolic teachers, but S. PAUL explicitly extends his reference to the position of all teachers in the Church, and the duties of Christians with respect to them. He explains the reason why he had spoken of himself and APOLLOS, rather than in general terms. "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and APOLLOS for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things that are written." It is, moreover, manifest that the apostle sometimes addresses himself to the Corinthians as a whole, and sometimes to the Corinthian teachers, and that

this difference of address contributes no slight proportion of the difficulty which undoubtedly attaches to the interpretation of the whole passage dealing with the subject of Christian teachers. We may admit that S. PAUL is primarily concerned with the Christian minister as a religious teacher, and that there are other aspects of the ministerial character, which are not directly contemplated in his words. We know from the pastoral epistles that there were presbyters in the apostolic church who did not "labour in the word," and that those who did so labour were then held to be "worthy of double honour." But, when all is said, it cannot be seriously questioned that the leading and distinctive function of the Christian minister is that of teaching, and that all the other functions may fairly be considered as included in this principal work. No member of the Christian ministry, and no task of any Christian minister, lies outside the range of the description which the apostle offers, or may be released from the limitations which he suggests. "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

The two words adopted as descriptions of the Christian minister are carefully chosen to disallow, what I shall take leave to call, the natural perversions of his office and work. "Minister" (ὑπηρέτης) and "steward" (οἰκονομος) are both humbling terms. The one emphasizes the notion of service; the other that of responsibility. As a "minister" the clergyman is precluded from making his office the foundation for self-advantage and self-advertisement. He exists for the Church, and not the Church, for him. S. PAUL has

accepted, and carried into his doctrine, the solemn and moving declarations of the Lord: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister" (διάκονος): "and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This word "minister" describes the active and laborious side of the clergyman's office. He is pre-eminently the servant of the Church. It is not without a certain melancholy interest that, among the pompous titles of the Pope, there should linger this lowly relic of a forgotten truth. The supreme pontiff is *servus servorum*. If, however, this description stood alone, the full greatness and the immense difficulty of the clergyman's work would not have been declared. He is not only the "minister of Christ" carrying on that tradition of unselfish service which Christ, the Founder and Head of the Church, did in His own person inaugurate, but he is also the "steward of the mysteries of God," and his service of the Church is determined and directed by that fact of stewardship. This word "steward" is connected with the interior and spiritual side of ministry. It affirms the far-reaching truth that the Christian teacher is not the author of his own message, but the responsible guardian of the message of another. The truth which he is commissioned to proclaim has better authentications than any which his personal authority can supply; he is the witness to the truth of God, the spokesman of a divine revelation.

At a later period it became customary to describe the sacraments as the "mysteries," and it appears certain that this use of the word was not remotely connected with the current practice of paganism; but in the apostolic age it seems impossible to discern any trace of the later association of ideas. In the apostolic writings the word "mystery" is used of the whole Christian revelation of truth regarded as a divine secret now at last, in and by Christ, made known to men; and the plural, "mysteries," appears to be used of the separate elements of revelation, which the Christian teachers, according to their perception of the needs of the Church, handled separately and emphasized variously. Perhaps we may refer, for a luminous commentary on the text, to S. PAUL'S description of the manner in which he himself understood and fulfilled the "stewardship intrusted to him." He pictures himself as matching the diverse aspects of the gospel to the diverse needs of men. The Jew, the Gentile "without law," the "weak"—all were enabled, by his sympathetic insight into their several points of view, to perceive in the Christian message just that for which their souls were hungering. "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof." This many-sidedness of the gospel, and the need of discriminating wisdom in its preaching which arises from the fact, are suggested by the phrase "the mysteries of God." The aspect of the gospel which S. PAUL himself mostly dwelt upon, and which he described in the start of his epistle as "the word of the cross," "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," was

widely different from that which his apostolic comrade APOLLOS, the eloquent Alexandrian, was wont to emphasize, and both these aspects were again different from that which men were accustomed to associate with the Jewish apostle, CEPHAS. In this variety of presentment undoubtedly the different idiosyncrasies of the apostles were reflected, and we may surely recognize in the fact nothing less than the consecration of individuality to the service of God's redemptive purpose. For what was apparent in the case of the apostles has been equally apparent in the case of their successors in the ministry. ROBERTSON, of Brighton, spoke truly of the value and the risk of this association of religion with the limitations of individual temperament:—

"PAUL and APOLLOS each taught a truth that had taken possession of their souls. S. PAUL preached one, as we know, which he called 'my gospel'—one peculiarly his own. Such is the case, too, with an inferior minister. Each man, each teacher, now as then, reveals to his hearers that truth which has most filled his own soul, and which is his peculiarly because it most agrees with his character. Well, this truth of his commends itself to kindred spirits in his congregation: it expresses their difficulties, it is a flood of light on many a dark passage of their history. No wonder that they view with gratitude, and an enthusiasm bordering on veneration, the messenger of this blessedness. And no wonder that the truth thus taught becomes at last the chief, almost the sole, truth proclaimed by him. First, because every man has but one mind, and must, therefore, repeat himself. And secondly, because that which has won attachment from his congregation can scarcely be made subordinate in subsequent teaching without losing that attachment; so that, partly for the sake of apparent consistency, partly to avoid offence, and partly from that conservatism of mental habits which makes it so difficult to break through systems, ministers and congregations often narrow into a party and hold one truth especially. And so far they do well; but if they should go on to hold that truth to the exclusion of all truths, so far as they do that it is not well; and nothing is more remarkable than the bitter and jealous antagonism with which party-men who have reached this point watch all other religious factions but

their own. And then the sectarian work is done: the minister is at once the idol and the slave of the party which he rules by flattering its bigotry and stimulating its religious antipathies." [1]

These dangers are never remote, and in ROBERTSON'S generation were particularly apparent: "Have I not given you a home history?" he asked his congregation at Brighton—"the exact and likeliest history of many an English party, which began with a truth, and then called it the truth, flattering one another, and being 'puffed up for one against another,' and manifesting that, with all their high professions, they were 'carnal, and walked as men.'" The great revival of interest in the liturgical and social aspects of Christianity has perhaps during the last half century mitigated the tendency, which prevailed among those with whom ROBERTSON was associated, to magnify the preacher, and form religious parties behind his name. Our ecclesiastical system, as it is expressed in the prayer book, provides for all who will rightly accept it, a powerful corrective of the tendency to hold Christian interest within the narrow grooves of an individual teacher's idiosyncracy, for the regular sequence of the Christian year brings every element of our religion successively before both teachers and congregations. But we are certainly menaced by another, though kindred, perversion of the clergyman's office. Not the man himself is commonly exalted, but the official. It is the priest, no more the preacher, who most often comes under the censure of S. PAUL'S words. This error is, indeed, far more subtle and dangerous than

[1] *Vide* "Lectures on the Corinthians," p. 64.

the other, for it does not so easily provoke the resentment of the modest and manly elements of character. Even in ROBERTSON'S day this error was rearing its head in the Church of England, and, with your permission, I will again choose his words rather than my own to describe it, only premising that what was incipient, and in a sense latent, then has since grown powerful and manifest within our church, so powerful and so manifest that it has become a question whether it can be restrained or corrected:—

"Many will refuse obedience to one standing on his personal gifts or party views; but when one claiming the Power of the Keys, and pretending to the power of miraculous conveyance of the Eternal Spirit in Baptism, or pretending, in shrouded words of mystery, to transform the elements of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Christ; or, declaring that he has an especial power to receive confession and a miraculous right to forgive sins, therefore claims homage from the congregation; then, grave men, who would turn contemptuously from the tricks of the mere preacher, are sometimes subdued before those of the priest. And yet this is but the same thing in another form against which S. PAUL contended in Corinth, for pride and vanity can assume different forms and sometimes appear in the very guise of humility. Power is dear to man, and for the substance, who would not sacrifice the shadow? Who would not depreciate himself if by magnifying his office he obtained the power he loved?"

It needs not that I should add anything to these grave and significant words; you may find their verifications on many, and those the saddest and most scandalous, pages of Christian history; and it seems to me that one cannot read the literature of the modern church without perceiving that the ancient enemy is again prevailing against us, and that the delusion of sacerdotalism is confusing both the mind and the conscience of English churchmen.

Against both these perversions of the teacher's office,

that which magnifies the individual and that which exalts the priesthood, S. Paul offers the protection of two solemn facts, implicit in the Christian ministry. On the one hand, the supremacy of the Christian society over its own servants and officers; on the other hand, the incommunicable responsibility of the "stewards of the mysteries of God." Here is the independence of the preacher fully secured without any sustenance offered to the preacher's vanity. Here is the limit determined of the legitimate requirements of service; beyond this point the claim of the congregation may not advance. For both church and minister alike stand before the judgment seat of Christ, who is the true owner of both. Here, then, is the effective condemnation of those parasitic ministries which draw their guidance and their substance from the opinions and prejudices of society; all the deep evil which has given to Erastianism its sinister significance in Christian experience is here disallowed and exposed. Here is the principle of the minister's self-respect, and the charter of the preacher's rights. "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord." As he uses this language, which almost seems too stately for human lips, the apostle characteristically insists on bringing all his brethren into the same great category of judgment. Ministry is inherent in the fact of discipleship. The minister as such differs but in

degree from the private Christian; there can be but one status, but one character in the family of God. So he widens his reference to embrace all Christians. "Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God." The tendency to judge others is deeply implanted in human nature, and takes to itself many justifications from the necessities under which we lie as members of society, but it is a dangerous tendency which we are most solemnly called upon, in the interests both of others and of ourselves, to restrain and criticize and keep under control. In that strange and melancholy book in which ARTHUR YOUNG, the famous agriculturist, wrote the story of his life, there is a striking example of the habit of judging others which then disfigured the piety of Evangelical Christians. He records a visit to Cambridge in the year 1804, when he made the acquaintance of the great Evangelical preacher, CHARLES SIMEON. In the course of conversation they discussed the number of genuine Christians in the world.

"I mentioned FRY'S calculation of three millions of Christians, but he very properly thought it very erroneous. He thinks Cambridge a fair average, and in 10,000 people knows but of 110 certainly vital Christians—more than 150 can scarcely be from a seventy-fifth to a hundredth part thereof!"[1]

Against such lamentable Pharisaism set the words of the Divine Master and Judge: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye

[1] *Vide* "Autobiography," p. 398.

shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

On the third Sunday in Advent, when the duty of the Christian ministry is shown in relation to the judgment day, and illustrated by the example of that fearless preacher of judgment who "prepared the way of the Lord," these considerations cannot be unfitting or unprofitable. For the clergy and the laity alike their solemn importance is manifest, and their searching censures are relevant. Let us seek grace from Almighty God humbly and honestly to fulfil our task, keeping always in mind the solemn account which we must one day give before the judgment seat of Christ.

III

SOCIAL AND NATIONAL

XVII

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY[1]

LET EACH MAN ABIDE IN THAT CALLING WHEREIN HE WAS CALLED. WAST THOU CALLED BEING A BONDSERVANT? CARE NOT FOR IT: BUT IF THOU CANST BECOME FREE, USE IT RATHER. FOR HE THAT WAS CALLED IN THE LORD, BEING A BONDSERVANT, IS THE LORD'S FREEDMAN: LIKEWISE HE THAT WAS CALLED, BEING FREE, IS CHRIST'S BONDSERVANT. YE WERE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; BECOME NOT BONDSERVANTS OF MEN. BRETHREN, LET EACH MAN, WHEREIN HE WAS CALLED, THEREIN ABIDE WITH GOD.
I CORINTHIANS vii. 20—24.

How ought Christianity to affect human society? This is a question which is often asked at the present time, and which too often receives an answer more facile than convincing. It is well to remember that the question was asked at the beginning, and has often been asked in the course of Christian history. Indeed it is an inevitable question whether your attitude towards Christianity be that of friend or foe. For in both capacities you will perforce admit that the discrepancy between the teaching of the gospel and the established maxims of human intercourse is so wide as to challenge inquiry on the point, how far those who accept the first can acquiesce in the last. Moreover, the practical importance of the question is very great, for Christianity is the most widely distributed, and probably the most powerful, force existing within the

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 17th Sunday after Trinity, October 11, 1908.

civilized society of the West, and its attitude towards that society (*i.e.*, the view which Christians themselves generally adopt as to the bearing of their principles upon the course and conduct of the world) will affect the stability of the social order most deeply. It would, of course, be impossible in a short sermon to deal adequately with so large and complex a subject, but I trust we may be able to form a clear notion of the answer which the apostle PAUL returned to the question as it was propounded to him by his converts in Corinth, and I hope it is safe for me to assume that that apostolic answer throws light on the more complicated but fundamentally identical social problem of our own age.

Let it be observed at the start that S. PAUL in this difficult seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is careful to guard against any exaggerated claim for his own teaching. The expressions made use of in his treatment of the practical problems, which the Corinthians had submitted to his judgment, indicate quite clearly that the apostle distinguished in his own mind between those teachings of his own, which were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and those for which he could claim no greater authority than that which his knowledge and wisdom could impart to them. "This I say by way of permission, not of commandment," is a modest formula for an inspired apostle to adopt. "Unto the married I give charge, yea, not I, but the Lord," is the emphatic phrase which introduces his statement of fundamental principle. "To the rest say I, not the Lord," is his careful introduction of teachings which had behind them only his own judgment.

It is, if I read the chapter correctly, this phrase which governs the passage which forms our text, for the clause, "So ordain I in all the churches," which marks his transition from questions of marriage to other social questions, does not affect the authority of the whole argument. It appears to me, therefore, that we are to consider the text, not as an inspired and infallible pronouncement, but as an apostolic opinion on the question with which we started—viz., How ought Christianity to affect human society?

What, then, is S. PAUL's answer? It is nothing else than the definite and complete repudiation of any revolutionary character attaching to the gospel. He speaks, as a contemporary Stoic might have spoken, of the utter unimportance of a man's circumstances. To the converted slave, full of the exultant consciousness of his spiritual equality with his owner, he says that he need not concern himself about his servile status; to the free man, conspicuous in the assembly of converted slaves and freedmen by virtue of his freedom, he says that he must not pride himself on his envied independence. Discipleship lifts both to that higher plane of existence on which the arbitrary distinctions of human society lose their meaning, and are absorbed in a common and heavenly franchise. "Our citizenship is in heaven."

Christianity, then, according to S. PAUL, is indifferent to circumstances, because it concerns itself solely with the ultimate creator and ruler of circumstances, the man himself. Therefore this indifference to circumstances does not properly imply a mere social fatalism, a doctrine of unqualified and perpetual submission

Rather it is the principle of reasonable social progress, for it begins at the beginning by enfranchising the individual in himself, and then through the enfranchised individual rectifies the conditions of his life in society.

Consider somewhat more closely how this Pauline doctrine bears upon practical issues. If Christianity be indeed the gospel of individual enfranchisement, then it cannot really be the ally of any social policy which hinders and contradicts that supreme object. Whatsoever holds men below the possibilities of their manhood is by that very fact, and to that precise extent, alien to the main intention of Christ's religion. This general proposition is universally true, but its practical significance will vary with the actual state of society. In S. PAUL'S age acquiescence in the servile status was necessary in the very interest of morality. To have proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves in the name of Christ, and stirred up a "servile war" within the empire, would not only have been practically fatuous, but would have failed to carry the approval of the general conscience. Society itself rested on the basis of slavery, and the best political wisdom of the age could imagine no other basis. The infant religion would have been extinguished in blood within a few years of its first proclamation, if the apostles had adopted this revolutionary conception of its character. The Church, however, could not postpone her spiritual triumphs until the minds of men had changed on the subject of slavery. As if for ever to disallow the facile notion that the gospel of Christ can rightly be interpreted as a revolutionary principle striking into the course of economic development, and

by the strong hand conforming human circumstances to an ideal born from above into the world, it has been the will of God that the most authoritative teachings and the most illustrious examples of Christianity should belong to a time when the very notion of conflict with social order was absent from the Christian mind, and a sublime patience was the most distinctive trait of the Christian character. By thus demonstrating the supremacy of the man over his circumstances, Christianity surely did more for the ultimate reformation of society than could possibly have been done by any direct onslaught on the circumstances themselves. To the ancients it seemed axiomatic that the highest kind of life, the life of the wise man or true philosopher, could only be possible to the sheltered or extraordinary few, never to the gross multitude, least of all to slaves. Christianity set before them the spectacle of common folk "living as philosophers." Self-respecting, chaste, temperate, independent in mind, honest and competent in service—these Christian slaves and freedmen conquered for themselves the reluctant homage of their persecutors. The paradox of servile virtue forced the reflective pagans to inquire into the source of so amazing a phenomenon; and inquiry was in many cases the prelude to conversion. In S. PAUL'S words the secret of Christian independence lies confessed. Within the believing slave's mind lay the principle of liberty, and the natural effect of his miserable circumstance was corrected by the power of a high conviction. "He that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman." Slavery itself, so absolute in its claim, so all-embracing in its effect, was

transfigured in Christian eyes; it illustrated the inevitable relationship of the redeemed to the Master, who by the bitter purchase-money of His own blood had redeemed them. The pride of social superiority sank before that thought. "He that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant." You observe that the apostle lays emphasis on this basis of his teaching. "Ye were bought with a price," he says, "become not bondservants of men." This of course is the old Hebrew theory as to Israel's status applied to the Christian Church. In the Book of Leviticus it is laid down that a Hebrew may not be held in servitude, because all Hebrews have been purchased by Jehovah to be His servants. "They are My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen." Similarly S. PETER bids his converts "not use their freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." The fugitive slave is sent back to his master, PHILEMON, with this significant message: "Perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord."

Such, then, was S. PAUL'S teaching. Christianity is indifferent to circumstances, because it directs itself to the true creator and master of circumstances, the man himself. The time came when the civilized world ceased to be nominally pagan and constituted a Christendom. How would the apostle's doctrine suit the new conditions? Two applications of it have been generally made. There have been those who, insistent on the letter

of His teaching, have represented the religion of Christ as wholly unconcerned with the secular conditions of human life. There have been others, especially in these later times, who, fastening on the spirit of the message, have claimed for the religion of Christ a foremost place in the reformation of human circumstances. It can hardly be questioned that a high estimate of human nature, the habit of mental and moral self-respect, will of themselves rectify circumstances and raise the general level of life. Moreover, they will predispose men to dislike everything that is plainly incongruous with a worthy treatment of human nature, and stir them up to an active sympathy with every policy which makes for the improvement of human life. I am inclined to think that this has been universally true wherever the facts of life have, so to speak, been within the control of the individual Christian. The Christian slave-holder in the Southern States of America did not see that his religion prohibited slave-holding, and quoted the sacred precedent of ONESIMUS as settling the question, but he cared for the interests of his slaves, and fulfilled towards them a ministry of fraternal service. He was rather lacking in imagination than mistaken in belief. If he could have widened his view until it embraced the whole significance of slave-holding—the brutal processes by which the slave market was replenished, the shameful breaking up of families, the miserable degradation of so many human beings, the moral degradation of the slave-owning class as a whole—he would have realized that a sound judgment on the subject could not possibly be formed on the narrow basis of his personal experience, that

slave-holding could not reasonably be judged in this and that example of generous and responsible ownership, but must be taken as a whole and decided upon in all its bearings. Lack of imagination perhaps still explains the extreme reluctance manifested by some excellent Christians to make any change in social arrangements, which, so far as they come within their own experience, are fairly satisfactory. If but they could take a larger and a less personal view of the question at issue, they would see it more truly, because its many and various ramifications would lie before them. This, to give but a single example, has commonly been the fault of the Anglican churchman, when he has had to make up his mind on some proposal for altering the quasi-feudal system on which rural life in England has until recently proceeded. He has refused to see more than the bare fact that the system, as it works in his own village, works without friction or difficulty; and he does not perceive that elsewhere it works very badly, and everywhere is dangerously out of harmony with the beliefs and aspirations of the people. The Pauline aphorism, 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life," is nowhere more conspicuously illustrated than in the case of the apostle's social teachings. The letter of those teachings belongs to an age far distant from our own, and reflects the conditions and the temper of a civilization very remote from ours. When we read this seventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, we are perplexed and perhaps disconcerted by the implied conception of the relation of the sexes, and by the apparent unconsciousness of the outrage of slavery

which marks the text. When, however, we seek to penetrate through the letter to the spirit of the teaching, we find that teaching to possess perpetual relevance and a wisdom which never fails. That the creator and ruler of circumstances is the man himself, and that therefore no rectification of circumstances which leaves the man unaltered will permanently serve him, are truths equally unpalatable and necessary, which serious social reformers can never afford to forget. Probably most serious reformers, however greatly they might differ as to the degree of importance which ought to be ascribed to circumstances in the scheme of a human life, and however various might be their conception of the best form into which circumstances should be refashioned, would yet agree that in the man himself must be found the key to the social problem, and that any social policy which ignores the fact of individual character is self-condemned of shallowness and futility. S. PAUL would certainly have maintained that this key to the social problem is provided by, and can only be provided by, the religion of Jesus. To preach self-respect and self-control to the bond-slave of fleshly appetite, or selfish prejudice, or degrading error, is a vain task. There must be an initial and preliminary process of moral enfranchisement and illumination before the individual can be trusted with the handling of any circumstances, and, once that process has taken place, he will not sink under the worst circumstances. S. PAUL can bid the converted slave acquiesce in his servitude because he can address him as "the Lord's freedman." He can offer a motive for acquiescence which strips it of

servility, and even invests it with spiritual dignity: "Ye were bought with a price; become not the bond-servants of men."

Was S. PAUL mistaken, think you, in thus insisting on the necessity of Christianity as the principle of human enfranchisement? At least, those who refuse to accept his teaching have not yet succeded in finding any effectual substitute for Christianity. It is the open secret of democracy that it is perplexed and alarmed by this failure. There are many who proclaim the Christian motive for virtue to have failed, and the Christian sanction for virtue to have been disallowed, who yet perforce acknowledge that they can find no other motive and no other sanction which will serve their turn. Democracy, by the confession of its own prophets, is threatened with moral bankruptcy, and this in spite of the immense efforts to improve the circumstances of men. We, to whom the motive and the sanction of Christianity yet remain valid and convincing, cannot but take account of this helplessness of the modern world apart from Christ, and if we admit, as of course we must, that there must be offered other and more convincing proofs before the case for Christianity can be made out, yet we may reasonably find here a confirmation of our own belief, and the right to assume from thoughtful men an audience, close and sympathetic, for our apology. To the modern world the Church can say what S. PAUL said to the ancient: "We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are being called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

XVIII

THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY[1]

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH.—S. MATTHEW V. 13.

THERE are no speculations at once more attractive and more precarious than those which aspire to estimate the social results of religions. The attractiveness is manifest and intelligible. Religion is the most deeply interesting thing in the world, alike to the man whom it attracts and the man whom it repels. Religion appeals to the deepest elements of human nature, and it raises every question into which it enters to a higher than the earthly plane. The conscience is directly concerned: the heart is directly affected: the imagination is powerfully stirred by every religious appeal. There is always the solemn charm of unpenetrated mystery, the chance, ever moving in the background of the mind and disturbing the order of rational thought, that there may be the truth in claims apparently the most extravagant, validity in reasonings apparently the most grotesque. In the religious sphere the human spirit is oppressed by an ignorance so profound that a positive attitude seems almost an outrage on modesty. Where it is certain that all know so little, who shall be

[1] Preached on the 2nd Sunday after Trinity, June 28, 1908, in S. Margaret's, Westminster.

sure that he really knows anything at all? There is, however, no subject upon which so much freedom of assertion is tolerated. The results of religion upon the characters and fortunes of nations are reckoned up, and set down with strange and disconcerting precision, and the estimates are as various as they are precise. These estimates, indeed, appear for the most part to reflect rather the prejudices of their authors than the conclusions of serious inquiry; and it is difficult to discover the principles of criticism which have been followed. Yet it would seem that no inquiries more plainly demand careful adhesion to sound principles. For none are more inherently difficult. The complexity of human life is such that no force acts in isolation. There is a subtle interplay of forces out of which results emerge which may not rightly be ascribed to any one influence. Moreover, causes disguise themselves wonderfully; and the effects of one cause readily pose as the effects of another. A large uncertainty, therefore, must always attach to all conclusions as to the social results of religion.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Our Lord in these words distinctly attributes to the society of His Church the character of a social force. "Salt" is the familiar symbol of that which purifies and preserves. Among the Jews it was not merely, as among ourselves, an article of common domestic use, but also an important element in the established religious ceremonial.

"The use of salt at the temple" says the puritan rabbinist LIGHTFOOT, "was exceeding much: for nothing was laid on the altar unsalted, but only the wood, the blood, and the wine of the drink-offering: and how much salt might be spent upon all their sacrifices, let anyone imagine: for this was the law, 'With all

thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' And they had not this way only for the spending of salt: but they also salted the skins of all the sacrifices, when they had flayed them off. For the skins belonged to the priests as their fee: the course therefore of the priests that was in serving did still salt the skins of what sacrifices they offered, that they might not be offensive, and kept them till the end of the week of their service: and on the eve of the sabbath, towards night, they divided them to everyone his share." [1]

Elsewhere in the gospel our Lord refers directly to this ceremonial use of salt. "For every one shall be salted with fire. Salt is good: but if the salt hath lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another." An ancient reading, now relegated by the revisers to the margin, adds the words, "And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Our Lord avoids the abstract terms in which modern teachers express and disguise their thought. We are apt to forget that "Christianity" is only a synonym for Christians themselves, when we are discussing social questions. "Ye," —My disciples—"are the salt of the earth."

"The influence of the Church on society means in its ultimate shape the influence of those who compose it. The Christian Church is to be the salt of the nations if Christians are true to their belief and equal to their claim. Nothing can make it so; nothing can secure that what has been, shall be, if they are not. And so we are brought back to the secret which our Lord's words intimate—the great secret of personal influence, the key of great movements, the soul of all that is deep and powerful, both in what lasts and in what makes change." [2]

Perhaps the safest guide to a due estimate of the social influence of Christianity in the world is to be

[1] *Vide* "Works," ix., p. 376.
[2] *Vide* Church, "Gifts of Civilization," p. 118, 9.

found in the study of individual discipleship. How does his religion affect the Christian in society? How far can his social practice be interpreted by his belief? Evidently to a very large extent the social conduct and influence of the Christian have, and can have, no relation to his personal religion. The determining causes of his action lie for the most part outside the range of his own choice. His place in society is prescribed for him; his powers of body and mind are not such as he might have chosen for himself; he acts under the influence of laws, traditions, customs, conventions, fashions, which are almost as far removed from his control as the climate or the weather. Where, then, is there any room for the action of religion? How shall he be the "salt of the earth" on which he lives in bonds?

I cannot think that it is sufficient to answer that he must be truthful, honest, just, industrious. So much is required of all good citizens; so much the general consent of reasonable men demands and approves. Without doubt the Christian will have motives for his civic virtue which his religion, and only his religion, can provide; but we are not now discussing motives. The social worth of virtue is to a great extent independent of its motives. The distinctive social influence of the Christian citizen will be found to lie wholly within the category of personal character. How far does the Christian gain for himself "the mind of Christ"? How far does his social influence reflect the Christian character?

The sermon on the mount opens with a description of the Christian character. This is the subject of the

beatitudes. Christ declares what moral qualities and attitudes go to the making of that social influence which His disciples exercise, and which constitutes them the "salt" and the "light" of human society. These qualities which our Lord pronounces "blessed" appear to be the precise opposites of the social qualities most natural to mankind. Would it be an extravagant caricature of the social teaching which, though manifestly not Christian, yet tends to prevail in nominally Christian society if we were to express it as the beatification of those dispositions and procedures which contradict Christ's beatitudes?

Blessed—so runs the sinister parody of the modern world—are they who have a high notion of their own rights, for they shall secure deference and regard.

Blessed are the light-hearted and the unthinking, for they shall enjoy life.

Blessed are the ambitious, for they shall rise in the world.

Blessed are the opportunists, for they shall escape disaster.

Blessed are the close-fisted, for they shall make money.

Blessed are the self-indulgent, for they shall make the most of life.

Blessed are the litigious and self-assertive, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the time-serving, for they shall be honoured.

Such a bitter summary as this appears to me something more than a caricature of the worldly wisdom which is commonly held to be the secret of success, and

which wonderfully affects the procedure of current society.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Christians are to be the living contradictions and disproofs of this worldly wisdom by setting before society the spectacle of lives governed by other principles, directed to other ends, and so far as they indeed do this they bring into the world's life a purifying influence which restrains the normal tendencies towards corruption, and quickens society with a new moral energy.

We know, of course, but too well that Christian lives are often strangely unworthy expositions of the mind of Christ. We know also in our own experience how prone the multitude is to attribute to Christianity the very faults which Christianity has been unable to restrain. The ill-conduct of Christians is a great, nay, the very greatest stumbling-block in the way of Christianity, though in itself such ill-conduct argues nothing against the religion it flouts and disgraces. The student of civilization must be on his guard against crediting Christianity with results which properly indicate that Christianity had failed of its purpose. It is easy enough to build up a formidable case against Christ's religion if you limit your inquiry and select your facts. Thus it has been argued with much plausibility that Christianity has favoured slavery, resisted political liberty, even degraded woman. For all these contentions unquestionably much may be said. There is a copious literature of social and political servility which professes to be Christian, and the doctrines of asceticism were certainly degrading to the female sex; and yet a very little reflection will demon-

strate the paradoxical character of all such contentions. The broad, outstanding characteristics of Christian civilization disallow so unfavourable an estimate of the Christian religion. "The tree is known by its fruits." Slavery has perished throughout Christendom, and servile conditions are perishing. Political liberty is unknown outside the sphere of Christianity, and social liberty, a far more difficult thing, is only there even partially attained. Within Christendom alone is the position of woman comparatively honourable and secure. I am perforce speaking briefly and positively, but neither carelessly nor without study of the facts. I submit that the distinctive features of Christian civilization vindicate Christianity from the suspicions which some facts of Christian history suggest. The true influence of Christ's religion, however, shows itself on a broad view of the facts, and we should be mad reasoners if we interpreted the details without regard to the general effect.

"It is simply a fact of history," observed that wise and cautious thinker, Dean CHURCH, "that Christianity and the Christian Church have exerted on human society a moral influence which justifies the figures by which it was described—an influence more profound, more extensive, more enduring, and more eventful than any that the world has seen." [1]

There is a further consideration. The subject-matter upon which Christianity has to act is difficult and intractable. Human nature, as it is displayed in history, is strange material from which to fashion the fair creations of social righteousness. It takes impressions gradually; it learns slowly and by definite stages.

[1] *Vide* "Gifts of Civilization," p. 97.

It would seem that the elements and postulates of right have to be beaten in to the dull intelligence of the race one by one. Here, perhaps, is the explanation of some of the problems of Christian history. How can you reconcile, it is asked, the severe penitential system of the early Church with the compassion of the Gospel? or the extravagant exaltation of celibacy with the Christian doctrine of marriage? or the detailed and tyrannous legalism of the mediæval Church with the spirituality of Christ's teaching? Perhaps the answer must in every case be found in the actual conditions of men's apprehension of spiritual truth. Before the compassion of the gospel can minister to righteousness, the gravity of sin must have been grasped, and that lesson was effectually taught to the semi-pagan converts by the iron system of primitive penance. Before the true nobility of marriage can be understood, men must learn the obligation of self-control, and that obligation was burnt into the barbarian mind by the ascetics. Before spiritual liberty can be safely proposed, the majesty of law must have been understood, and that was, perhaps, borne in on men's intelligence by the masterful government of the mediæval Church. The religious education of the race is an advancing process. The truth is not grasped at once, or as a whole, but gradually and fragmentarily; here a little and there a little, as men are able to bear it. The partial teaching, regarded from the plane of complete knowledge, has a repulsive aspect; insisted on in the face of wider teachings, it may be deeply false; but it should never be forgotten that there was once a time when it matched the urgent needs of the race. The influence

of Christianity has ever been brought to bear upon human societies which were not of Christian fashioning. It has thus taken a myriad forms, addressing itself to the varying conditions of human living; but always this is its claim, and this the facts attest, it has been a purifying and preserving force—"the salt of the earth."

Three contributions, perhaps, are ever made by Christianity to the life of society.

First, the gospel brings to the world the gift of social hope. It upholds a social idea, not as a mere aspiration, still less as a satire on the world's life, but as something practicable, which can be gained, and which shall be gained. The Christian may not despair of society, however unpromising the social outlook may be. He believes that the Almighty has a purpose to fulfil in human history, and that the course of the world's life is not wholly independent of His will.

Next, the gospel brings to everyone who receives it the conviction that social service is a religious duty. To withdraw selfishly from the tasks and risks of social life, whether in despair or in self-absorption, is the repudiation of a divine commission. Every Christian must feel a certain responsibility for the world's sin, and for the sorrows which at once reflect and avenge it. Christ's example challenges and commissions every disciple. "We must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." The world is saved from acquiescing in its scandals by the divine indignation of Christ's disciples. There is no conspicuous evil of human society which has not provoked the resentment of the Christian conscience. In the background of every Christian's

mind is the conviction that it is his duty to resist evil where it meets him, and to attack abuses when they cross his path.

Finally, the gospel brings to everyone who receives it the conviction that personal righteousness is a social duty, and the condition of social service. Primarily the Christian's task is to illustrate in his own sphere the "mind of Christ." The Christian conscience has always chafed against any severance of the disciple's practice from his profession. Here is an illustration. In the early centuries the custom obtained among persons who made pretensions to piety to adorn their garments with sacred pictures in place of those commonly adopted.

"Bedizened with such figures they supposed—as AUSTERIUS, Bishop of Amasia in Pontus in the last half of the fourth century asserts—that their dress must be well approved in the sight of God. This excellent Churchman advises them rather to dispose of such garments for as much as they would bring, and use the proceeds to honour the living images of God; instead of carrying about the sick of the palsy on their garments rather to look up the actually sick and relieve them; instead of wearing on their bodies a kneeling penitent in embroidery, rather to mourn over their own sins with a penitent spirit."[1]

Such has always been the attitude of the Christian conscience towards the parade of piety. Translate your creed into conduct: give a social expression to discipleship: be yourself the illustration of your religion. In so contributing to the world's life the elements of hope, of duty, and of personal discipline, Christianity counteracts deep normal tendencies making for corruption and decay, and literally fulfils the Word of the divine Founder: "Ye are the salt of the earth."

[1] Neander, "General Church History," iii., p. 388.

The Social Influence of Christianity

The civilization of antiquity broke down beneath the burden of its own corruption. The machinery of government could not endure the cynical selfishness of those who worked it. Philosophy had no message of hope, no power of moral restoration, no coercive motive of self-discipline. It sank into satire and pessimism.

The civilizations of the east appear to contain no quickening principle, which shall be a power in men's minds detecting abuses, waging war with them, always straining and striving after social advance. They petrify and perish.

The latest civilization of the west, if by so great a name we may describe the attempts which mark our time to banish the Christian elements from a society which has reached its present position under the tutelary influence of the Church of Christ, appear to discover a fatal inability to secure uprightness of character. Prodigal of brave doctrines of social duty, the secularist is doomed to see his projects dashed to pieces on the sunken rocks of human selfishness.

Christianity in the social sphere stands for hope, and the sense of duty, and personal righteousness: and—let us lay it well to heart—Christianity is in this connection but the sum of the influence of individual Christian lives. Upon us all, who own ourselves the disciples of Christ, who in our baptism were solemnly sealed as His "soldiers and servants," lies the great obligation to be, in our several places and situations, the exponents of the gospel, not merely, if at all, in word of formal teaching, but always in the silent, ceaseless testimony of righteous lives, lives which bear visibly the Christian stamp, which are a continual rebuke to all the baseness

of the world, a continual challenge to all the goodness latent in society, lives which, wherever lived—in cottage or in palace, in the heart of mighty cities or amid the solemn silences of immemorial hills—are a force of purification and preservation in the general life, the "salt" and "light" of the world.

XIX

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO RESPECT THE GENERAL CONSCIENCE[1]

TAKE THOUGHT FOR THINGS HONOURABLE IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.—ROMANS xii. 17.

THE student of S. PAUL'S writings takes from his study a deep admiration, and something near to a personal affection for the apostle. The other writers of the New Testament are either altogether unknown, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews and perhaps the author of the Johannine writings, or as with S. PETER and S. JAMES we know but little of their history, and are unable to read what they have written in connection with the objects they were at the time pursuing. With S. PAUL the case is different; we are able to follow his arduous life almost from first to last, and there is no one of his epistles which cannot with fair probability be placed in its true historic context, and connected with the circumstances which induced and coloured its composition. The apostle was one of the men whose characters are displayed to view in their writings; both the charm and the obscurity of the Pauline epistles arise from the frank self-exhibition of the author. Perhaps in no religious writings is the personal equation

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on Septuagesima, February 16, 1908.

so important, for in none is the personal point of view more constantly adopted. Especially in his applications of faith to practice is this to be borne in mind. The apostle was the most honest and humble of men, and he would not press as duties on others what he had not perceived and accepted as duties in his own case. It is a frequent practice with him to illustrate his moral teaching by describing his own action. He seems to shrink from taking a merely external attitude, and exhorting his converts as from some raised chair of authority. He would rather stand on the same level with them, and offer his own example as that of an elder brother marked out by his position and relationship for their moral assistance. The more deeply he is moved on any matter, the more he inclines to this egotistic method of moral teaching. Thus, when he would restrain the "stronger" members of the Corinthian Church from so using their spiritual liberty in respect of non-essentials as to wound the conscience of their "weaker" brethren, he sums up his teaching in a personal declaration:—

"Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble."

So, also, when he would assert against the self-confident neophytes of Corinth the indispensableness of self-discipline, if indeed they were to escape the corruption of pagan sensuality, he propitiates their vanity, and challenges their conscience by speaking of his own practice:—

"I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage, lest by

any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

Therefore, in S. PAUL'S case, it is possible to argue back from his precepts to his personal practice more confidently than in the case of most religious teachers. Always, I suppose, save in the happily rare case of conscious and complete hypocrisy, the habitual teaching of a man throws light on his personal character, for it cannot but reflect in some degree his idiosyncrasy, and discover the set of his interests; but in most cases, as we know but too well, there is a lamentable discrepancy between the teacher's admonitions and his own behaviour, and there are indeed few of us, who carry this burden of the teacher's office, who have not to pray our hearers not to accept us as the satisfactory exponents of the truth we declare. We are happily assisted in our understanding of the precept in the text by two examples of its practical application indicated by S. PAUL himself. A little way on in the epistle to the Romans he deals with the duty of Christians with reference to what he calls "doubtful disputations," that is, questions of practice which fairly admitted of diverse answers, and were therefore the subjects of discussion within the Church. Rules of fasting, discrimination between foods, observance of holy days, and similar matters came within this description. It is clear enough that the apostle himself inclined to agree with those who held lightly by all these positive rules, which counted for so much in the religious systems both of Jews and of Gentiles. He would not, however, allow his personal preference to weigh in the scales; he would not make his own opinion the rule of the Church.

For, indeed, he could see the whole issue with the eyes of a statesman as well as with those of a pastor. In the one case, he perceived the risks of creating unnecessary obstacles in the way of the gospel by tying up his message with demands which were extremely distasteful to non-Christians, and from the Christian point of view indifferent. In the other case, he perceived the wounds to conscience and to character which an unchecked indulgence of personal preferences, albeit themselves harmless, would inevitably inflict. Christian liberty exercised without regard to charity would cease to be Christian, and could hardly remain in any worthy sense liberty. Just opinions intemperately asserted would convey false impressions. This is the point at which the admonition of the text is to be applied. "Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men" says the apostle. Avoid such an exercise of your rights as must, on a reasonable estimate of probabilities, lead to misunderstanding of your intentions. "Let not your good be evil spoken of." You must, as reasonable and charitable men, take account of the state of other minds than your own; actions are not interpreted by the doer of them, but by the observer; and his interpretation will in a large degree be determined by the pre-suppositions and associations with which his mind is furnished. S. PAUL had learned by experience the perverting power of prejudice, and he spoke out of a full heart. The student of the sub-apostolic age knows how widespread and how extravagant was the misunderstanding of the Pauline teaching. In a document of the period, which has found a place within the New Testament, the second epistle of S. PETER, we read that

there were "ignorant and unstedfast" Christians who "wrested to their own destruction" the writings of the apostle; and to this day antinomianism has claimed to justify its ruinous error by passages from S. PAUL's epistles. The apostle's ill-fortune in this respect adds a pathetic interest to his counsels; like BAXTER in a later age, he seemed to his own contemporaries the most controversial and doctrinally audacious of teachers; yet in the retrospect of later generations both the great apostle and the great puritan are seen to tower above their contemporaries in charity, and in the sense of doctrinal proportion.

In the second epistle to the Corinthians S. PAUL applies his precept to a specific and familiar situation. He had caused a collection of money to be made through the Gentile churches for the benefit of the poor Christians of Judæa, and he had to arrange for its safe carriage to Jerusalem. He insisted on having some duly appointed representative of the contributing churches associated with himself in the matter, and he gave as his reason the importance of leaving no loop-hole through which suspicion could find entrance: —

"Avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

It had indeed been well if the caution of the apostle had been made the rule of Christian finance, for all the world knows how great a volume of discredit has grown from the disregard of it. We may not forget the warning which lies on the surface of religious history, that high theory and great enthusiasm and the best

intentions are no sufficient securities against financial maladministration, which begins in carelessness or ignorance and too often ends in dishonesty. The robust good sense of mankind does not approve the association of exalted spiritual objects with doubtful financial expedients. Let me illustrate the point by some examples. How great scandal attached at the Restoration to the Church of England from the circumstance, that very large sums were paid as fines for the renewal of leases to the clergy, and were too often treated as being morally, what of course they were legally, the property of individual clergymen! There were illustrious exceptions, especially among the bishops who spent large amounts on their cathedrals, but every student of that age knows how widespread was the scandal. I have often reflected on the benefit conferred by the State on the Church in the legislation, furiously resisted at the time by the clergy, which commuted the tithe, and established the Ecclesiastical Commission for the better distribution of ecclesiastical endowments. Any student of the political caricatures of the nineteenth century knows how remarkable a change passed over the suggestions implicit in the pictures of the clergy. In the earlier period the suggestion is almost always that of wealth, covetousness, gross living; in the later period, this suggestion hardly ever appears. It lingers still on the lips of the lowest type of popular agitator, but even there is becoming rarer. In some measure the change is due to the rise and progress of the Oxford movement, but I incline to give a greater importance to the legal changes which simplified and made intelligible the finance of the Church, and removed

the crying scandal of excessive and ill-administered endowment. The zeal with which the clergy opposed the salutary action of the State might well have been restrained by the recollection of the apostolic admonition: "Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men."

The combination of religious work and commercial undertakings is so perilous in itself, and has resting on it so emphatic a condemnation of Christian experience, that we may well incline to think that it is disallowed by the apostle's precept. The downfall of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century was in no slight degree connected with their trading concerns, which not only drew on them the jealousies of the commercial interests which they injured, but did grievously lower the tone of the order. If the astute rulers of that powerful society had remembered the counsel of S. PAUL, and "taken thought for things honourable in the sight of all men," they would not have found in the day of calamity that the public conscience was wholly alienated. I cannot refrain from a yet nearer illustration of my subject. The Salvation Army presents the same dangerous combination of religion and commerce; and in its case also that combination has been gravely challenged. No one could have read Mr. MANSON'S elaborate, detailed, and severe indictment of the financial methods of the Army, published in 1906, without feeling that the authorities of the Army were required by every consideration of religion, of honour, and of policy, to meet the case urged with so much ability and apparent command of facts. So much impressed, indeed, was I myself by reading Mr. MANSON'S book, that I could not believe

that the authorities of the Army could leave it unanswered. Yet when I inquired at the headquarters of the Salvation Army, I was informed that no answer has been given or will be given to this most grave indictment. The official informed me that the authorities of the Army thought Mr. MANSON's book "beneath their notice." I am very sure that that opinion will be shared by no one who has read it, nor can I think it in any degree justifiable. I would respectfully commend to the consideration of General BOOTH and his colleagues that religion itself suffers when the good faith of its representatives is suspected, and that they have no right to neglect criticisms which carry so far and cut so deep. Assuredly they would forfeit their claim to the confidence and the support of thoughtful and responsible Christian citizens, if they could not promptly disprove what is discreditable in this indictment, and would not promptly remedy what is shown to be unsound in their system.

It is important to remember that S. PAUL had to reckon with the public opinion of a non-Christian society. There would have been large excuse for an attitude of indiscriminating hostility, for the social habits of the imperial population were steeped in sensuality, and intertwined at every point with idolatry. "The whole world lieth in the evil one," writes the latest of the apostolic authors, and when we attempt to realize the common course of pagan life, and judge it by the standard of the gospel, we are not disposed to resent the description as extravagant; yet we can perceive and appreciate the deeper justice of S. PAUL, who could see in the system of ancient civilization elements

of goodness, beauty and power which he would not consent either to ignore or to belittle. He was by right of birth a Roman citizen, and he looked on the vast edifice of Roman government, not with the hostile suspicion of a conquered provincial, but with the honest pride of a good subject. He was by temperament a statesman, and he could understand the political sagacity which the imperial system expressed. He was the greatest of evangelists, and his experience had brought home to him the value of Roman justice and Roman order. He shared with the greatest of his contemporaries a cosmopolitan habit of thought, and his conception of a catholic church fitted in with suggestive facility to the scheme of universal empire. Thus, by temperament and training, as well as by the circumstances of his life, he was better able than the rest of his contemporaries to rise above the prejudices of his race and creed. Still it remains a deeply impressive fact that he could recognize the moral worth of the general conscience, and bid his converts defer to its censures and covet its approbation. I have preferred to say the general conscience rather than public opinion, because I think the apostle, while ever displaying a manly contempt for the prejudices and passions of the multitude, had a gennine belief in the soundness of the moral judgments of the general conscience. It could be trusted to bear true witness to the rightness or wrongness of the conduct which Christians offered to its astonished and often reluctant consideration. This deep respect for the human conscience lay at the root of all his moral teaching and made it at once persuasive and stimulating. Good citizenship, neighbourliness,

personal rectitude, self-denial, purity—these could command the homage of the non-Christian, and they were the constituents of Christian duty. S. PETER gives a true summary of S. PAUL'S teaching when he speaks of the good behaviour of Christians as the divinely ordained instrument for the world's conversion :—

"Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ; having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The case with us is not that which confronted the apostle. We have to reckon with the public opinion of a society which for thirteen centuries has been influenced by Christianity, with a general conscience which has been illuminated by the ideas of the New Testament and by the example of Jesus Christ.

In these circumstances the gravity of any conflict between the Church and the conscience of the nation has become for manifest reasons more considerable, and the admonition of S. PAUL has acquired a cogency and a relevance which at the first could hardly have belonged to it. "Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men," addressed to the members of an ancient national Church, carries the awful suggestion of the words of Christ, when He warned His disciples against causing any of His little ones to stumble, or of those other words in which He described the utter perdition of professed Christians who had so far receded from the meaning of discipleship that they were in the world, which they were commissioned to redeem, as "salt which had lost its savour," which men cast out as

good for nothing. It is not enough that our general intention should be good, or that we should be fully persuaded of our own rectitude, if we have not brought both our policy and our personal advocacy of it under the government of this rule of prudence and charity. "Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men," S. PAUL wrote when the Church was a very small factor of the world's life, and when his counsels had to be reduced to practice by obscure persons in lowly places; we have to determine our applications of his words when the Church is the oldest and most criticized of social institutions, with historic links binding it closely to many, and sometimes curiously incongruous interests, carrying the burden of a weight of memories, and sustaining a vast fabric of human hope. The difficulty of our task is only equalled by its importance, for if, in our zeal for some allied and perhaps little consistent cause, we compromise in the general view and even submerge our true purpose, we wrong deeply the society to which we are commissioned as disciples of Christ. To "take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men" may seem a precept beyond our powers to obey, yet at least we can set before ourselves the ideal which it suggests, and cherish the faith which it utters. So to live in the world that we may place no hindrance in the way of men, but may show the beauty of holiness in common life, and lead men by its winning guidance to the service of Christ—that is the ideal; to revere human nature, to trust the honest and true spirit in man, and to appeal with just title to its sanction and support—that is the method of faith.

Pursuing that ideal and adopting that method, we shall have courage to resist the passing gusts of fashion, and strength to sustain the opposition of selfish interests, for we shall know well that "there are more with us" than with our opponents, and that there can be but one conclusion to the conflicts of the conscience. If we are not overcome of evil, we are able sooner or later to overcome evil with good. "In due season we shall reap if we faint not."

XX

THE NOBILITY OF THE BERŒANS[1]

NOW THESE WERE MORE NOBLE THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA, IN THAT THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

We are very apt to think that the message of Christianity, as it is now proclaimed by the Church, fails to command the audience of men in anything like the same degree as was the case in former times. We look round on society, and observe its seemingly unalterable indifference to the appeal of the Church, and we mentally contrast this indifference with the zeal displayed by those multitudes to whom in the first instance the Christian message was addressed. The contrast suggests the uncomfortable suspicion that for some reason, whether some defect in delivery, or some radical mishandling of the message, or some stumbling-block of scandal, that message has in our hands lost much of its original force. Our depression even threatens our faith; and though we may preserve the latter, yet we forfeit much of that Christian hopefulness, without which it is stripped of much of its aggressive force. It may not fairly be questioned that there is some justification for our depression. There

[1] Preached on the 6th Sunday after Trinity, July 26, 1908, in S. Margaret's, Westminster.

is more in it than the mere human weakness, which ever tends to disparage the present and magnify the past. The impression among Christians is too prevalent and persistent to be so easily explained. It cannot but be rooted in actual observations and experiences. Nor indeed would it appear difficult to indicate these when we reflect that in certain particulars of manifest importance the message of the gospel, as it is delivered in the twentieth century, has disadvantages which assuredly had no existence in former times. Of these perhaps the most obvious, though not necessarily the most important, is the portentous division of the Christian society into many mutually conflicting sections. We can hardly be mistaken in thinking that this division is a cause of great evangelistic weakness, for the divine Founder of the Church did Himself in the most solemn way link together the unity of the Church and the power of the gospel to win the audience and acceptance of mankind. On the eve of the Passion Christ prayed that all disciples might be one in order that the world might believe in His divine mission. Since then this unity appears to have been generally obscured, and from many Christian minds wholly banished, the declared will of the Founder is plainly disregarded, and the condition of the world's conversion, which He indicated, does not exist. How can any thoughtful Christian mindful of his Master's words be astonished at the practical weakness of preaching which is thus unconditioned by Christian unity? The world, we may suppose, is unconvinced of the truth of the gospel because, among other reasons, the Church fails to exhibit that oneness, which would

naturally follow from an *ex animo* acceptance of its own message.

Again, it can hardly be doubted that in the beginnings of Christianity the gospel was commended by its very novelty to the attention, if not also to the acceptance, of men. The apostles proclaimed to the multitudes of the empire truth which was certainly new. They could count on the insatiable curiosity of the human mind to secure for their preaching an attentive, if ultimately an hostile, hearing. The sensation caused by their preaching was clearly very great. Indeed, their enemies laid hold of this circumstance as a plausible reason for interference on the part of the state. Thus we read that the Jews of Thessalonica "troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city" by insisting on the revolutionary character of the gospel. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom JASON hath received, and these all act contrary to the decrees of CÆSAR, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." In our time the Church, at least in Europe and America, no longer possesses this advantage. The doctrine of Christianity is generally familiar: its message has become almost commonplace: truths, which at their first proclamation shook men's hearts, now scarcely succeed in attracting their casual notice: Christianity also has to illustrate the disheartening maxim, "Familiarity breeds contempt." Especially, perhaps, in this country and in America, where from causes, partly historical, partly social, the licence of thought and speech in matters of religion has proceeded to lengths hardly tolerated in former times, the familiarity of men with the ideas and phrases

of Christianity has to be reckoned with. When their ears are deafened, their good sense offended, even their civic rights invaded, by an incessant and disordered propagandism, is it to be wondered at that ordinary Englishmen turn away with impatience from the appeals of religion? "For heaven's sake, sir, don't talk to me about religion; I can't put my head out of doors without hearing it shouted from every corner of the streets," said a very respectable artizan to me once when I called at his house on my round of pastoral visits. I believe the zealots of Christianity are gravely mistaken in taking no thought for the resentments they may be provoking by their well-intentioned but ill-regulated evangelism. "Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men" and "Let not your good be evil spoken of" are two Pauline maxims which might be commended to the leaders of religion in England and America. Be this as it may, it will be agreed that the novelty of the gospel was an advantage possessed by the first preachers, which has ceased to belong to their successors.

In view then of our present circumstances, we may not deny that there is some foundation for the prevalent impression that the gospel now is far less able to win audience and acceptance than formerly. Allowing this, however, we must be careful not to permit that impression to take too great a place in our thought. For surely a little reflection will show us that, as in the present so also in the past, the gospel did not conquer human acceptance as a matter of course, but had a very various reception, determined in every case by those very circumstances of temperament, history, and

condition, which do still in the main determine its fortune among ourselves.

It should never be forgotten, whenever we institute comparisons between the present and the past, that we see the latter in a very long perspective. We see it as a great landscape is seen in the decline of a brilliant day, by the light of the failing sun: every tree, every rail, every blade of grass is touched with glory: every stream and pool glows as molten gold: it is a scene of dazzling brightness; yet we know that the shadows are as deep as the light is fierce, and that at any given point in the landscape the lengthening shadows would be as manifest as the light which casts them. So it is with the past. We see nothing, or almost nothing, beyond the outstanding events of triumph and tragedy, which the page of history records; but if we had lived in the several ages, we should have found that these by no means exhausted the experiences of life, but that the shadows of prosaic failure and the unromantic commonplaces of common folk were as present and even more apparent. In some sense, of course, it is true that the distant perspective brings into view the just proportions of facts, which in a nearer regard were misjudged; and we all know that contemporary estimates are often the least equitable and judicious; nevertheless, something more than justice of proportions is required for a right estimate of events. There must be also that knowledge of circumstances which is lost or obscured in a distant view. Seen at a distance the towers and spires of a city stand out grandly against the sky, and it is possible to do justice at once to their beauty and their altitude; but the true character of the city itself will not thus be

learned: the streets and lanes which dwarf or conceal those towers and spires are truer witnesses than they when that is the subject of inquiry. Remembering this, we must ever chasten our admiration of the past by our knowledge of the present, and thus in a sense charter our own experience to interpret history. We shall sometimes discover that our depression may thus become changed into the minister of consolation.

In the text we have a picture of apostolic preaching drawn from life, and are able to watch the very process. Two classes of hearers are distinguished. The one, that of the Jews of Thessalonica, meet S. PAUL'S message with firm hostility, refuse to consider it on its merits, fix their undivided attention on that aspect of it which most offends their prejudices; give themselves up to the fierce and reckless temper of jealousy; and, finally, under its malignant dominance, have recourse to violence in order to suppress the gospel. They will not harken: still less will they weigh arguments: they will only oppose. The other class, that of the Berœans, behave in a very different manner. They certainly had as much reason to dislike the gospel as their Thessalonian neighbours, for they also were Jews and devout students of their sacred books. They could hardly be less zealous than the others for the covenant privileges of Israel, of which the catholic gospel of S. PAUL declared the final end. The religious study of the Berœans, however, had induced in them a humbler disposition than the mere enjoyment of privilege is apt to encourage. They are prepared to learn that new and amazing developments have been ordained of God for Israel; and though they feel keenly the affront which

the apostle's teaching inflicts upon their traditional notions of religion, they will not refuse to give a fair hearing to a message professedly based on the scriptures. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." This readiness to listen with patience, and examine with candour, is the special claim of the Berœans to be accounted "noble"—that is, as the Greek word must be literally rendered, "gentlemen." It is not the credulity of the Berœans that is praiseworthy, but their courtesy and candour.

We are all but too familiar with credulity. In every age, but most of all in those ages which are marked by widely-diffused scepticism, there are multitudes of credulous people who are ready to accept anything that is urged upon them with sufficient insistence. No charlatanry is too gross, no doctrine too absurd or too immoral, to find disciples among us. This wide credulity is of course the circumstance upon which religious impostors have ever securely counted: and truly the resources of human folly have never yet disappointed the hopes of human craft. There is nothing creditable, nothing Christian in credulity: it is to Christian faith what tinsel is to sterling metal, or, to leave metaphor, what servility is to courtesy, what meanness is to economy, what superstition is to religion, what vanity is to self-respect. It has a certain superficial resemblance, since both credulity and Christian faith imply the acceptance of some external teaching, but there the resemblance ends. Faith is the temper of deliberate, responsible, intelligent acceptance, as it were the affixing

of a signature after due thought and with full consciousness of all that is involved. Credulity is the temper of a shallow and facile acceptance at second-hand, as it were the affixing of a signature reproduced by lithography, or some other mechanical device, and extensively circulated for purposes of advertisement, or business, without inquiry and without sense of responsibility. Both, indeed, are signatures, but the one represents the free and intelligent action of the individual, the other represents nothing but a formal act. If I dwell long on this distinction, it is because I observe a disposition in many quarters to ignore it. Many are very scornful of credulity, who are far, indeed, from the "noble" temper of courteous and candid inquiry. The Thessalonians were not credulous, but they were certainly not rational. To refuse to listen is not less irrational than to accept without examination: and it is scarcely less common. In one respect, indeed, the former is the more discreditable. Few people, however credulous, are accustomed to make a boast of their credulity, but most people of narrow and obstinate minds are in the habit of priding themselves on their inaccessibility to new ideas. They flatter themselves on their acumen, when they should bewail their obstinacy: they exult in their consistency, when they should lament their unteachableness.

The Berœans appear to have been equally removed from the folly of credulity and the conceit of prejudice. They listen to the gospel with an open mind: that is, not certainly a mind vacant of prepossessions and convictions, for that were to have no mind at all; but a mind disciplined and reverent, able therefore to realize

its own limitations, and to venerate the convictions of others. They listened "with all readiness of mind," but they did not there and then without further reflection believe the gospel. They brought it to the test of the scriptures—in this case, the right test, since the gospel professed to be the true exposition of the scriptures; and only when, after examining the scriptures, they had found that the gospel justified its claim, did they own themselves disciples.

The fair criticism of new propositions requires that the right test should be applied: that is, the test which the nature of the proposition permits. We read earlier in the narrative that S. PAUL supported his message by an appeal to scripture; therefore it was right that the scriptures should be the authority to which the Berœans should have recourse when they desired to test the truth of that message. This elementary rule of reason and fair play has been often ignored by Christians, who have thus been led into very grievous wrongdoing. When, for instance, the Roman Church of the seventeenth century condemned GALILEO because the astronomy which he taught plainly contradicted the words of the Bible, this was the root of error. The matter was not one which could properly be brought to the test of an appeal to scripture. Not the Bible, but the observations and reasonings of scientific students of nature, must decide the truth of an astronomical theory. When Bishop COLENSO was condemned by the English convocation, and exposed to the denunciations of the religious public, because of his book on the Pentateuch, the same error, with far less excuse, was committed by a Protestant Church. Questions of historical and

literary criticism could not be determined by appeals to ecclesiastical decisions, the authors of which had been wholly unconscious of the circumstances which raised, and the facts which were implied in, those questions. When the English public gave way to a religious panic after the publication of DARWIN'S great books, the "Origin of Species" and the "Descent of Man," it was repeating the error of the Thessalonian bigots who persecuted S. PAUL. Instead of calmly applying the right test to the new scientific theories, it raised a tumult and indulged in angry denunciation. The appeal to the text of Genesis was not less irrelevant than irrational. The Bible is not the authority in scientific inquiries: to bring these to the test of scripture is on the face of it to perpetrate an injustice, and, we must add, an act of folly also. It is of the first importance, then, that we should make sure that in criticizing new propositions we are applying the right test. Forgetfulness of this elementary rule goes far to explain the melancholy and suggestive fact that the appeal to the Bible has been the favourite procedure of Christian folk whenever new theories, critical and scientific, have challenged their beliefs.

I began by contrasting the reception of the gospel in the first days and its reception now: I end by reverting to that contrast. The former factors are all present now as then. Still we have our Thessalonians, men who will not listen to the message of Christianity, who will sweep it aside with a contemptuous epigram, and assume that the confidence of their own rejection demonstrates the soundness of their argument. They defeated S. PAUL: they are proof against the reasoning

of religious men still. Happily these do not exhaust the number of modern hearers. We have still our Berœans, nobler souls, who are on the watch for divine messages, who listen with attention, and consider with candour, and inquire with patience. To such the appeal of the gospel can still be addressed with confidence of success.

So we conclude that the power of Christianity to win the acceptance of those to whom it is addressed did not at the start, and does not now, depend on any human quality, not the eloquence and zeal of S. Paul, not the learning of modern theologians, but always and everywhere on its own divine character, its essential truthfulness, brought out to view by the frank application of honest and rational criticism. The gospel does still commend itself to the acceptance of all "men of goodwill," of all who will be fair enough to listen, and patient enough to inquire, and honest enough to yield, and brave enough to obey. The apostles had no secret which the Church of our own day does not possess for inducing men to receive the message of the love of God; nor can it be proved that they had a greater measure of success. The record of their labours was as much a record of failure as of triumph. The Church which they gathered was but a scanty election out of a vast multitude. The general rule, then, as now was rejection. Yet we can see that in spite of all failure they were fulfilling their function, and laying deep and broad the foundations of historic Christianity. May we not dare to hope that as much may be true of the modern Church? Instead of driving us to despondency and doubt our difficulties should lead us to self-

examination and effort. The abiding stumbling block to discipleship comes from within the human heart itself. Let us look to it that we ourselves are free from that inward evil: that of us the spiritual record may be written in these terms of ancient commendation. In an age filled beyond precedent with new and amazing revelations of truth may we be as these Berœans, of whom it was said that "they were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

XXI

THE REDEMPTION OF NATIONALITY[1]

BEHOLD I HAVE GIVEN HIM FOR A WITNESS TO THE PEOPLES, A LEADER AND COMMANDER TO THE PEOPLES.

FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS, SAITH THE LORD.—ISAIAH lv. 4, 8.

It would hardly be an excessive description of the contrast between the Old and New Testaments to say that the one was intensely national and the other intensely individual. Yet it would certainly be untrue to infer from this any proper conflict between the Jewish and the Christian scriptures, for the teaching of the prophets moved steadily in the direction of an ethical, that is, a conditioned individualism, and the teaching of Christ and His apostles pointed to the final expression of individuality in a perfected social order. The highest note of prophecy is that which declares the individual human spirit to be the true instrument of divine revelation. The Creator Himself is offered by Micah as the supreme prophet of religious truth, delivering in the sanctuary of the conscience a clear and authoritative testimony to the divine character and will:—

"He hath shewed Thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, January 19, 1908.

Perhaps the highest note of apostolic teaching is struck in that noble declaration, in which S. PAUL at once discloses the inspiring motive of his own career of service, and disallows any selfish interpretation of the gospel of redemption :—

"For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died ; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."

In the teaching of our Lord the two elements, social and individual, are combined in the doctrine of the kingdom on the one hand, and in the demand of discipleship on the other. The combination emerges with impressive distinctness in the first proclamation of the gospel. S. PETER and S. JOHN, standing before the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, and receiving an official command to cease from their missionary work, make answer in words which stand on record as the formal statement of the divine right of the individual conscience to override all external authority whatsoever :—

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

The actual message of the apostles, as described in the Acts, was a passionate appeal to the nationalist hopes of Israel :—

"Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

It is deeply significant that the Christian Bible includes both the literature of the nation and the

writings of the apostles. The older ideal of a national redemption is taken up into the treasure of Christian hope, and the primary insistence on individual salvation is not allowed to shut out the larger vision of a perfected human society. The language of the Hebrew prophets utters the ultimate destiny of the Christian Church when, on the lips of the apocalyptic seer, it sketches the fair and ample outlines of "the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God":—

"The nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The distinctiveness of national type, and the perfection of individual character, are united in this final triumph of redemption. Again and again Christian men have been tempted to give up one or other of these elements, to sacrifice the national type to the discipline of the individual, or to abandon the discipline of the individual in deference to the national type. Against this tendency, ascetic or ecclesiastical or Erastian as the case may be, the Bible, with its combination of a national literature and the apostolic writings, has been, in the providence of God, the grand preservative of the Christian Church. As students of prophecy, we cannot think meanly of all that is implied by nationality; as disciples of the crucified Jesus and members of an apostolic Church, we cannot surrender the rights of the private conscience, or consent to any interpretation of the gospel which shackles or disallows

the free and full expression of individuality. The epiphany of the Incarnate is to be perceived in the history of nations as well as in the history of the Church, and the Son of Man vindicates His name in every truly natural aspiration of the human race. The Redeemer's mission is not to destroy, but to fulfil. Thus He formulated His redemptive programme: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

If we review the history of the Christian religion without prejudice, I think we shall be compelled to admit two facts: first, that human individuality has under the discipline of Christianity attained its completest expression; and next, that nationality has flowered most richly under the influence of the Christian Church. Take any type of the individual life you will, and compare its Christian version with any older or contemporary version, and judge whether discipleship be or be not friendly to individuality. The Christian monarch is confessedly the highest type of monarch; the Christian statesman is the highest type of statesman; the Christian merchant, or soldier, or artizan, or artist, is severally the best of his kind. Especially in the case of the natural relationships is this superiority of the Christian manifest. The Christian parent, husband, mother, wife, child, friend, is beyond dispute the highest example of the several types. Take, next, the more difficult case of the nation. Christianity was born into a world organized strongly against nationality. The Roman Empire had levelled the barriers between nations, and reduced their characteristic civilizations to one uniform type. Even the religions, which are ever the strongest buttresses of nationalism, had been brought under the

yoke, and everywhere tended to a common level of faith and morals. Nationality stood out in untamable self-assertion only in the case of the Jews, to whom the Christians looked as their spiritual ancestors, from whom after the flesh the Incarnate Himself had come, whose sacred writings were accounted inspired scriptures. Into this world thus anti-national in order, and de-nationalizing in tendency, the Christian religion was brought, and from the first began to operate as a power of enfranchisement :—

"The liberties of the ancient nations were crushed beneath a hopeless and inevitable despotism, and their vitality was spent, when the new power came forth from Galilee, giving what was wanting to the efficacy of human knowledge to redeem societies as well as men." [1]

While the empire stood, the Church was unable to exert its full power; the early centuries are filled with the dramatic conflict between the rival kingdoms of CHRIST and CÆSAR. When the cross had triumphed, the unifying principle of the imperial system had failed, and it was not long before the barbarians from without pressed in irresistibly on the enfeebled and dissolving empire. At first view church and state appeared to have perished in a common ruin, but soon it became apparent that the tremendous disaster, "the foundering of a world," was the opening of a new and grander chapter of Christian effort, which was to record the creation of western Christendom. Will any student of the facts deny that nationality, growing to maturity under the influence of the Christian Church, is a richer, greater, more impressive and fruitful thing than nationality outside the sphere of Christian influence? I would

[1] Lord Acton, "Essays," p. 28.

appear to be the case, then, that both with respect to the nation, and to the individual, the religion of Christ has approved itself a force of invigoration and progress; that alike in the sphere of personal and of social life, the epiphany of the Incarnate is to be traced in blessing. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Reviewing the history, we may take on to our lips the words of the Hebrew prophet, and recognize their providential fulfilment: "Behold I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to peoples"; and as we remember the strange misunderstandings of its own work which the Christian Church has again and again exhibited, and blush for the many sad records of Christian perverseness and scandal, we perforce confess our blindness and folly, and bless the patient and over-ruling mercy which carries through the purpose of the Eternal. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Probably there are no professing Christians anywhere who seriously dispute the obligation to preach the gospel to the foreign peoples, who now profess some other religion. Indeed, it would be impossible for any reverent student of the Bible to doubt, that it is the clear purpose of God that the message of redemption brought to the world by His blessed Son should be, by the agency of Christians, carried to all the races of mankind. It would be absurd for those who, as is our case, owe their knowledge of Christianity to the foreign missions of the past to deny, either the reasonableness,

or the worth of such evangelizing efforts. When, however, we pass from theory to practice, and consider the actual course of events in the mission field, it is probably true to say that on all hands there is hesitation, misgiving, and secret incredulity. It will not have escaped your notice, that there has recently been issuing from the press a considerable number of books treating of missionary methods and results. Some are openly hostile; others are severely critical; few, if any, are entirely favourable. On two points, especially, there seems, even among the friendly critics, to be substantial agreement. First, that recent events in the sphere of politics have enormously added to the importance of missionary work; and, next, that the experience of missions points to the necessity of a different handling of the problem than that which has generally prevailed in the past. Let me make a few observations on these two points.

1. The unrest in India, which has caused, and with justice, so much anxiety to thoughtful English citizens within the last few months, has set many among us inquiring into the actual effect upon the populations of that immense and various country of the new influences implicit in the relationship which exists between them and the people of this land. Here I will take leave to recommend to your attention the current issue of the journal published, by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, under the title "East and West." A shilling would be well expended in the purchase of this journal. From beginning to end of this quarter's issue there is scarcely one uninteresting or unimportant page. The opening article by the Bishop of Southampton,

lately Bishop of Bombay, on the unrest in India and some of its causes, ought to be widely read. It appears evident to those who have personal knowledge of the East, that a process of disintegration has been set up by the rapid introduction of western ideas and methods, and that, since the principal agent of western influence is, for sufficient and notorious reasons, limited in its range of action to those concerns which we call secular, the eastern peoples are threatened with the most grievous injury conceivable. We are destroying their ancestral beliefs, and undermining the morality which those beliefs sustained, and withal bringing no substitute for either. Bishop LEFROY, of Lahore, has stated the case with admirable lucidity in an article contributed to the volume of essays, "Church and Empire," which the Archbishop of Canterbury has commended to our attention as the composition "of men who are on every ground entitled to be listened to." After stating that the great systems of Indian thought, life, and religious belief are necessarily breaking up and passing away under the contact of our keener, more vigorous western civilization and thought, Bishop LEFROY proceeds :—

"But what words can adequately depict the seriousness of such a state of things, the gravity of the issue which has to be faced? As the old passes away, in what mould is the new civilization and life and thought of this marvellous old land to be cast—in that of materialism, or of a living faith in God?

"Against the former alternative the whole of India's past life would seem to cry out in vehement protest; and most of us, I suppose, decline for an instant to believe that this can be the great and final outcome of our contact with this land. Assuredly were it to be so, a more terrible indictment could never be framed against our motherland and our national Church than would thus lie against us at the bar of history and of God. That we had

come to this land, and found it—amidst whatever terrible abuses and hideousness of belief and practice—had found it religious to the very core, had undermined that religious life, broken it up, and made its further continuance impossible, and then, giving them no true and life-giving faith in its place, had left them to drift anchorless on the sea of materialism, alienated from God and without hope in the world—from such a charge may God indeed of His infinite mercy preserve us!"[1]

All authorities agree that the sudden emergence of Japan as a great power of the western type marks a new epoch in the history of the relations of East and West; that the spectacle of an Asiatic race conquering, in a great war, a first-class European power has disclosed vistas and quickened ambitions far and wide; that the rapid process of education is opening the eyes of the eastern peoples to their own possibilities and to the secrets of western strength and progress. The missions of the Christian Church are being increasingly recognized by thoughtful students of eastern life, as the indispensable factor which can supplement the secular work of the empire, and mitigate the materializing tendencies of European civilization. Between the East and the immense disaster of materialism stands the forlorn and embarrassed figure of the Christian missionary, not solely, perhaps not mainly, the accredited preacher of the gospel, but the man, whether clergyman or layman, civil servant or merchant, soldier or sailor, clerk or engineer, who carries into his habitual contact with the people of the east the spirit of Jesus, quickening responsibility, sustaining often against the greatest difficulties the severe purity of the Christian law, colouring all the actions of an

[1] Pp. 73, 74.

arduous life with the dignity of self-respect, and the high justice of Christian charity. These Christian missionaries redeem empire from baseness, and arrest the desecrating forces of an eager and selfish commerce.

2. While, thus, there is a general and increasing agreement as to the importance, nay the indispensableness, of Christian missions, there is also a growing perception of the mistakes which have marked, and do still mark, the missionary methods of the Christian Church, and some approach to agreement in the matter of evangelistic policy. In two respects we are being led to perceive that a change is necessary. On the one hand, we must reach some measure of working harmony, and spare the non-Christian peoples the truly dismaying spectacle of "our unhappy divisions," and, on the other hand, we must deal more reverently with the distinctive nationalities of the non-Christian world. We must appreciate "the religious climate" of the East, and realize that our traditional notions about the gospel are not necessarily, or even probably, worth transplanting to other lands. We must be at once less confident and more courageous, less well-assured of our own western theology, and more convinced of the fashioning power of Christ's gospel. This is the main argument of a little volume entitled "The Empire of Christ," recently published by Messrs. MACMILLAN, which I take leave to advise you all to read. The author insists on a larger view of the Christian gospel than has hitherto governed missionary work. It is indeed the old prophetic view restored to its place in the thought of the Church. Not individuals merely, but nations are to be redeemed, nations as nations, with all the constituents of their

nationality cleansed, exalted, and enriched, nothing of the whole wondrous creation compromised or lost. He reminds us of the great lesson of Christian experience, how, under the benign and stimulating influence of the Incarnate, human life has displayed its potentialities most freely and fully ; and he pleads for faith to perceive that what Christ has done for the Teutonic races, He is commissioned to do for the Asiatic peoples, and that our duty is so to bring His gospel to the nations of the East, that they also may be able to find in it the fulfilment of all that they have been led to aspire after and attempt of righteousness and truth. If, indeed, as we consider the grotesque aspect of Oriental religions, and the customs, tyrannous and degrading, of Oriental society, we are tempted to question the potential worth of both, and to despair of the redemption of either, we must recover confidence in the power of Christ, and the catholic range of His working, by holding our minds steadily to the revealed purpose of God, recalling the triumphs of Christ in the past, and resigning to His wonder-working providence the final achievement of His plans: " Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

XXII

CHRIST AND NATIONALITY[1]

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD IS UPON ME; BECAUSE THE LORD HATH ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD TIDINGS UNTO THE MEEK; HE HATH SENT ME TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES, AND THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THEM THAT ARE BOUND; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD, AND THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD; TO COMFORT ALL THAT MOURN IN ZION, TO GIVE UNTO THEM A GARLAND FOR ASHES, THE OIL OF JOY FOR MOURNING, THE GARMENT OF PRAISE FOR THE SPIRIT OF HEAVINESS; THAT THEY MIGHT BE CALLED TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE PLANTING OF THE LORD, THAT HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED.—ISAIAH lxi. 1—3.

THESE are words of religious hope spoken by a prophet of the Lord to his countrymen at a dark hour of their history as a nation. Israel was in exile, far banished from that sacred soil on which, as they believed, they had been planted by the express will of Jehovah, amid demonstrations of His favouring providence. They had long exulted in the assurance that they were His "chosen people," and many prophets had promised them in His name an illustrious future. Yet experience had not justified their faith. They found themselves outcasts from the "land of promise": blotted out from the map of the world; no more a nation, no more even a visible Church; only a company of conquered men serving their conquerors in the "land of captivity." We may be sure that failure of personal faith came to many in the wake of public

[1] Preached in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, January 17, 1909, in aid of the Lord Mayor's fund for the victims of the Italian earthquake.

disasters. In that stage of religious development religion was so little a concern for the individual, and so much a concern for the nation, that when the nation collapsed the individual was as a lost man, bewildered and undone. Yet that very disaster, in which the very bases of religion seemed to be destroyed, was to be the means of a recovery of religion in a deeper and purer form, no longer tied to the national fortunes, but rooted in personal conviction. From the Babylonian exile the Jews would come back to Palestine far other than they went out, having learned much and unlearned more in the years of exile. The close of the exile had witnessed the rise of a new type of prophet, less political and more spiritual than of old, more concerned with the sincerity of the national religion than with the prosperity of the nation, addressing its message therefore ever more to the individual conscience and less to the general mind. Not that the later prophets surrendered the ancient national hopes, only they conceived of their fulfilment in more spiritual ways, and did not bind up faith and fortune in the old manner. Glorious fortunes were still promised to the nation, but always it was insisted upon that the nation must first be cleansed in its constituent individuals. EZEKIEL unites the assurance of individual purification with the promise of national prosperity; the first is the condition of the last: "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

What was the effect of Christ's advent on this national hope? Did He make an end of all distinctive claims of

Jewish nationality? Is discipleship to be understood only in a strictly individual sense? Is Christianity hostile to the separate and distinctive characteristics of the nations? Will there finally be no room found for variety of national types in the triumphant establishment of the "kingdom of heaven"? These are questions which naturally suggest themselves at this Epiphany season, when the wondrous self-manifestation of God in Christ is the subject of Christian thought. Let us consider but the single point of the destiny of nations within the Christian scheme.

Our Saviour was always careful to respect the national hope; avowedly He came "not to destroy, but to fulfil"; He never moved outside the frontiers of Palestine, and His personal example was that of a loyal Israelite. He joined the public worship of the temple and the synagogue, and made the scriptures the foundation of His preaching. Nothing could be less revolutionary than the whole aspect of His ministry. At the same time, Christ clearly taught that He was the agent of an immense and abiding change. The "kingdom of God" which was the burden of His preaching would effect a complete though silent revolution on the earth. It would finally recreate society in church and state on principles as yet unrecognized in either. All mankind came within the range of His mission, and the consummation of all things would be found in a complete ejection from God's kingdom of all evil.

In dealing with individuals Christ was plainly careful to observe and discipline, never to destroy, their distinctive characters. No more clearly marked individualities are to be found than those of the apostles;

and ever since Christianity has strengthened and consecrated the individuality of its professors. The recognized saints of Christendom are not a series of replicas of one model, but a various multitude of individuals, consecrated and directed by one divine Spirit. Historically considered—that is, having its true nature and tendency deduced from its actual course in history—Christianity must be judged to be equally favourable to the individuality of nations. Nationality has flowered most richly under the influence of the Christian Church.

This aspect of the Redemption was not unknown to the apostolic founders of the Church. In becoming disciples they did not abandon, still less repudiate, the national hope, which they had inherited from the prophets of the older covenant. They interpreted the great language of Jewish patriotism more spiritually and more humanely, but they renounced nothing of the religious heritage. An individual salvation could not satisfy them; they must find in the final triumph of the Redeemer the satisfaction of their national ideal as well as the vindication of their personal faith. The Church was spoken of as the true Israel, and believers were a "holy nation." It may well be the case that the apostles and their converts could not apprehend the full meaning of the words they used: but experience rectified their errors, and widened their vision, so that it is matter of fact that they have left as their legacy to the Church writings which are singularly free from Judaistic nationalism, and frankly compatible with nationality in its widest expression. The apocalyptic seer, when he draws his picture of the triumphant

Church under the symbol of the "holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God" sees therein the nations walking in its light, and their kings, the public demonstrations of national independence, "bringing their glory into it." Thus he unites in the final victory of Christ both individual and nation l redemption.

The Roman empire, we said, was hostile to national development; and, we must add, that hostility has been perpetuated in the Roman Church, in which the spirit of the empire continued after its external fabric had perished. The papacy has been happily described as "the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned on the ruins thereof." Let it be admitted that the whole interest of mankind is not contained in the formula of national development; and that the stern discipline of external law, overriding the claims of nations, was indispensable in the earlier phases of social development. The Roman papacy, in the childhood of Europe, fulfilled a necessary function; but when childhood was outpassed, and nationality grew to the fulness of its powers, that function of authoritative control ceased to be necessary, and the attempt to perpetuate its exercise brought great misfortunes to the world. At the Reformation the conflict between the rightful claims of maturing nationhood and the obsolete claims of ecclesiastical authority, which had been smouldering under the surface of mediæval Christendom for many years, broke out violently, and rent Christendom asunder. Happily it was possible to distinguish between the spirit of the Roman Empire which inspired the papacy and the genuine spirit of

Christ's religion. The making clear of that vital distinction was the great service rendered to mankind by the reformers. Wherever the Reformation was accepted a reconciliation was effected between the gospel and the nation; and the true character of Christ's religion as the cleansing and exalting of whatsoever is genuinely natural to man was vindicated. National churches replaced the single organization of the mediæval Church. The authority of Christ as expressed in the New Testament was set above the authority of the hierarchy centred in the Pope. It has followed from all this that national development has proceeded within the sphere of the Reformation more easily and with larger result than outside it. The countries from which the Reformation was driven, and in which the power of the papacy was established, have been the scene of constant friction between church and state, so that Christianity has seemed to take the character of an anti-national force. Yet the unfaltering instinct of patriotism has ever turned to Christianity in expectation and appeal, and the distortion of Christianity by the sacerdotal or clericalist system has been deeply resented. Nowhere has all this been more conspicuously illustrated than in the history of that nation which to-day is the object of universal sympathy. Italy, beyond any other nation, has been the victim of the papacy; and when, so recently that the older men among us can remember the facts, Italian nationhood was enabled to find political expression, the victory of national liberty had no bitterer foe than the Pope. Yet the Italian patriots were slow to believe that the chief representative of Christ's religion would resist

their righteous and beneficent purpose. Nothing could be more pathetically suggestive than the pertinacity with which they cherished the belief that Pius IX. was the friend of Italian liberty instead of its worst foe; and never since that great crisis have there been lacking Italian patriots, who have dreamed of a reconciliation between the Church and the nation of Italy. Assuredly the supposition which underlies that dream is sound. Christ's religion has its true expression in patriotism, and consecrates nationality. Here in England, where the harmony between Christianity and patriotism has for centuries been manifest, and is now an essential part of our political tradition, we applaud and encourage the hope of those Italian patriots who are also Christians. May the blessing of the Almighty be upon them, and crown their efforts and sufferings with complete and lasting success!

Now let me say something about the appeal which is addressed to us to-day. The unparalleled extent of the disaster, the terrifying character of its incidents, and the bewildering necessities which it has occasioned are all well known to you, and I need not dilate on them here. If, however, there be any among us who are disposed to resent the acceptance of responsibility for foreign distress when there is so much domestic distress which is inadequately relieved, those are considerations which may well remove their resentment. There are misfortunes so grievous that all ordinary troubles seem petty beside them, and assuredly such a grievous misfortune is this. In the history of Europe there has been nothing like it, so far as our historic records tell. Imagine the whole population of the city

of Westminster suddenly crushed to death beneath the ruins of their houses, and you will only be imagining what has actually happened in Sicily and Calabria. When the loss of life has been so appalling, it is hardly worth while to speak of the destruction of property, yet this has been immense. Italy, the most peaceful of the nations in time of peace, has in a night lost more than the cost of a considerable war. In face of a disaster on such a scale surely there is no fitness in speaking about our home difficulties.

Then, I think, this is a time when we may well remind ourselves of the debt we owe to Italy. From Italy came the Roman law, which taught the barbarous peoples of Europe the principles of justice and equity. From Italy came the Roman missionaries, who carried to our heathen ancestors the message of the gospel. From Italy, at the Renaissance, came the arts and the knowledge of classical literature, which gave new birth to the intellectual life of Europe. The poorest Englishman who has never left this island cannot shut his eyes to the greatness of Italy. Let him go to the Abbey and wonder at the mosaic floor which after more than six centuries retains its strength and beauty; let him admire the monuments of HENRY III. and HENRY VII. and the Lady MARGARET, his mother, and remember that Italian artists made them all. Let him go to the more modern cathedral of S. PAUL, which is the finest effort of English architects, and, as he gazes at the great building, let him remember that the style is Italian, and the latest decorations modelled on Italian works. Let him visit the National Gallery and see room after room glowing with the masterpieces of Italian painters. If he is a student of history,

let him take from the shelves the record of the struggles for Italian independence, and exult in the chivalry and heroism of Italian patriots. If we are able to travel and have visited Italy, what a debt we must acknowledge to that lovely land, so rich in the memorials of the famous past, in the creations of ancient civilization, in the accumulated treasures of ancient art, and to that kind and joyous people who make the English traveller so welcome. Gratitude as well as compassion must incline us to make an effort to bring help to Italy in this dreadful time of trouble. Assuredly a more sacred motive than either cannot be wanting here. "Bear ye one another's burdens," said S. PAUL, "and so fulfil the law of Christ." A greater than S. PAUL, He from whom S. PAUL learned the sublime doctrine of charity which glows on the pages of his epistles, his Master and ours, has summed up all religion in the tender and moving gospel of fraternity. "One is your teacher: all ye are brethren." "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." "Freely ye received; freely give." He declared that He was Himself appointed to fulfil that great mission of comfort which the prophet of exiled Israel had described; and He made clear that He would effect that fulfilment through His disciples. He associated them with Himself in the great venture of consolation. Through them He would still be in the world "binding up the broken-hearted" and "comforting all that mourn." In bearing help to these sorely-afflicted Italians we shall be obeying His solemn call: "We must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

XXIII

A LAW OF LIBERTY[1]

SO SPEAK YE, AND SO DO, AS MEN THAT ARE TO BE JUDGED BY A LAW OF LIBERTY.—S. JAMES ii. 12.

1. LIBERTY is a name to conjure with. Alike in the political and in the religious sphere it almost stands for the synonym of truth, of wisdom, of self-respect. In literature, as well ancient as modern, it is the very label of human greatness, heroism, and achievement. The most illustrious nations are precisely those which, whatever may have been their relative importance in point of size or power, were conspicuously free. Their liberty is the sufficient patent of a nobility which never provokes the resentments of the human reason: the symbol of a greatness which never fails to maintain its hold on human admiration. Greece, Judah, Florence, Switzerland, Britain stand in the record of history as the chosen lands of liberty, and their sons can only be indifferent to the glory and excellence of liberty by disowning their birthright. Proudly the lowliest Briton recalls the ancient freedom of his race, and finds a

[1] Preached in S. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, on January 23, 1910, to Young Men.

moral invigoration in the retrospect of his national past :—

> In our halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible knights of old :
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That SHAKESPEARE spake ; the faith and morals hold
> Which MILTON held. In everything we are sprung
> Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

The first object which arrests the gaze of the traveller as he approaches the city of New York from the sea is the great statue of Liberty at the entrance of the harbour, holding aloft a torch as if guiding the nations to the chosen land of freedom. Nowhere, indeed, in the world is there so ample a homage offered to liberty as in America. You see it in the carriage of the people ; you read it in their newspapers ; you are reminded of it in a thousand ways. The opening paragraph of the "declaration of independence" has sunk deeply into American minds, and seems to impregnate the American atmosphere : "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In proposing to address you to-night on the subject of liberty, I may surely count in advance on all the advantage which a speaker can obtain from a great and interesting theme.

2. You observe that in my text liberty is strangely associated with another conception, and one which at first sight might seem to have little in common with it, the conception of law. There is almost a paradoxical aspect about the apostle's phrase which compels reflection. What can be meant by "a law of liberty"?

Earlier in the epistle he has used a similar phrase, which evidently has the same reference. He speaks of "the perfect law, the law of liberty," which brings "blessing" on the man who obeys it. When we consider what may be the origin of this strange phrase, we remember that the writer is a religious Jew, who has been brought into the closest relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, being indeed His own brother. We remember that he is a leading figure in the Christian Church, and has been intimately connected with the apostle PAUL, with whose characteristic teachings he was not wholly in sympathy. From these sources, the Jewish scriptures, the teaching of Christ and the epistles of S. PAUL, he might well have derived his notion of "a law of liberty." In the Psalms and the prophets there is the same combination of liberty and law as if the latter were the natural condition and pledge of the other. "So shall I observe thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I have sought thy statutes." Such language is freely scattered over the psalter. JEREMIAH had spoken of a "covenant" to come, in which the contradiction between law and liberty would have ceased because the righteous requirements of law would have become the free aspirations of the individual: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it." The rabbis had caught something of the prophet's thought when they said of the true student of the law that he was free: "Thou wilt find no freemen but him who is occupied in learning the law: and

whosoever is occupied in learning the law, behold he exalts himself."[1]

In the sermon on the mount our Saviour had set in clear contrast an external obedience to specific legal requirements, and an internal acceptance of the very principle aad purpose of the moral law; and had demanded of His disciples such an obedience as would bring them into true agreement with the very Author of the moral law: "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." S. PAUL, perhaps more completely than S. JAMES, had understood the teaching of the Master, and been guided by it not only to a triumphant vindication of Christian liberty against the yoke of Jewish legalism, but also to a firm grasp of the moral franchise inherent in discipleship. "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." "Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." "Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." We may, indeed, infer from the passionate urgency of the apostle's language that his converts were scarcely able to rise to the truth which he taught them. The franchise of Christ was almost too great for those servile minds. Anxiety and indignation are blended in S. PAUL'S remonstrances: "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another." That S. PAUL had good reason for anxiety the subsequent

[1] *Vide* Taylor, "Sayings of the Jewish Fathers," p. 113 f.

fortunes of Christianity have abundantly shown. Even within the precincts of the New Testament we have indications that the gospel of Christian liberty had been deplorably perverted into a teaching of licentiousness. We read of false teachers who "promised liberty" to their dupes, "while they themselves were bond-servants of corruption." It may be that S. JAMES had such persons in mind when he coined his striking phrase—in which we can trace the influence of psalmist, prophet, Master, and colleague—"a law of liberty."

3. Liberty in political history tends to be identified with freedom from external restraints. The champions and martyrs of liberty are those who have resisted unjust demands, refused unwarrantable exactions, defeated tyrants. Hence an undue emphasis has been placed on what might be called the negative or destructive side of freedom. On the regicide's cave at Newhaven I observed that someone had inscribed these words: "Opposition to tyrants is obedience to God." The date, 1803, which the writer had added, allows us to suppose that he had in mind one of two forms of oppression, either that of the older French monarchy, against which the Revolution had been directed, or that of the new Napoleonic empire which had for the time being overcome the Revolution. The sentiment underlies a good deal of political discussion at the present time, and may stand as a statement of what is called the "sacred right" of insurrection. I neither deny nor belittle the justification of the political doctrine when I say that it is a partial and inadequate conception of liberty which limits it to the destruction of tyrannies

political and social. Moral liberty, we know, is compatible with every extreme of political oppression, and social hardship. The stoics had grasped that truth, when they coined their familiar saying: "Only the wise man is free: every fool is a slave." The most pathetic of all human tragedies is the familiar combination of a genuine passion for liberty and self-conscious moral enslavement. Let me give you a well-known but not on that account the less impressive instance. In DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S "Journal of a Tour in Scotland" there is an account of the poet's visit to the grave of ROBERT BURNS. "We looked," she writes, "at the grave with melancholy and painful reflection, repeating to each other his own verses":—

Is there a man whose judgment clear
Can others teach the way to steer,
Yet runs himself life's mad career,
Wild as the wave?
Here let him pause, and through a tear
Survey this grave.
The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low
And stained his name.

Could the pathos of conscious inadequacy be more touchingly expressed? I suppose that pathos rests in some measure upon every human life, perhaps most darkly on the best. The mention of WORDSWORTH inevitably recalls the thought of that ordered liberty to which in his personal life BURNS never attained. Nowhere else has the conception of a law of liberty received such noble and luminous illustration as in the

immortal ode to duty, which surely should be written in the memory of every young man. From the solemn invocation, "Stern daughter of the voice of God!" to the final prayer of self-surrender:—

> Give unto me, made lowly wise,
> The spirit of self-sacrifice;
> The confidence of reason give;
> And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!

this incomparable composition breathes a spirit of deep and self-respecting piety, which may well give it a place among our spiritual classics.

4. "So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty," that is, I suppose, as men who have been clothed with the franchise of Christ, called to a "reasonable service," even that service of God, which is "perfect freedom," in whose hearts dwells that "spirit of the Lord," whose presence is the sure pledge of liberty, who walk in the way of that commandment which, as the psalmist sang, is "exceeding broad." "For all things are yours: whether PAUL, or APOLLOS, or CEPHAS, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Such words of bounding enthusiasm seem natural and fitting when they are addressed to Christian youth, young men with the unwasted powers of their manhood, and the undisclosed possibilities of their life, as it were in their hands, facing the future in the full dignity of their spiritual sonship, looking around them on a world which they know to be theirs by inheritance, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and they are, and own themselves to be, His children. Yes: youth has a

glory and a greatness of its own, which no other time of life can match :—

> Flowers are lovely ! Love is flower-like ;
> Friendship is a sheltering tree ;
> O the joys, that came down shower-like,
> Of friendship, love, and liberty,
> Ere I was old.

So we sing in later life, casting glances of regret upon the distant springtime of life, and doubtless seeing it transfigured in retrospect. A sober reflection will not resent such language. The wise man's appeal rings true, as well in his homage to youth as in his suggestion of harder days to come: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, or ever the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Just because youth is invested with such august prerogatives, and carries such a treasure of possibilities, the friend of youth would press on the young man's attention, with the more anxious and affectionate insistence, the frailty of his tenure of those prerogatives, and the contingent character of all those possibilities ; and would address to him the more earnestly the apostle's appeal : "So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty."

5. Among the *logia* or sayings, which have recently been recovered from the preserving sands of Egypt, there is one which in Dr. Swete's version reads thus :—

"Jesus saith : 'Who are they that draw you to the kingdom? The kingdom is in heaven ; but they that are on earth and the birds of the heaven and every creature that is under the earth and in Hades and the fishes of the sea, these are they that draw you to it. And the kingdom of heaven is within you, and whosoever

shall know himself shall find it; for if ye shall truly know yourselves, ye are the sons and daughters of the Father Almighty, and ye shall know yourselves to be in the city of God, and ye are the city.'"

The teaching of this remarkable *logion* seems to be thoroughly evangelical. Given the right point of view, then all nature and all life become serviceable to human guidance and help. All lead to the kingdom of God: nay, all discover themselves to be factors of the kingdom, in settled and salutary alliance with the sons of the kingdom. For they have the power of piercing through the sorry and dismal disguises of sin, which seem to transmute the good things of God into the very agents of evil; they see all things as they truly are in His idea who made them, as they shall surely become, when His handling in providence has fulfilled itself, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." As the apostle said, "To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure: but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." Yes; the solemnity of youth lies in its potency of ruin, as well as in its potency of blessing. The risks are equal to the hopes: the shadows are the deeper, since the sunlight is so bright. Perhaps these risks are mostly connected with a mistaken notion of natural liberty. Two errors may be distinguished.

6. Natural liberty is thought to imply a right of self-expression, which is really identical with the older and less pleasing phrase, self-indulgence. The young man is conscious of the powers of his manhood, physical, mental, moral, and he desires to put them all to the

proof. He would have no chamber of pleasurable sensation closed against him; he would traverse the whole cycle of possible experiences. Everything that interposes an obstacle between desire and enjoyment is resented as a violation of natural liberty. If it be circumstance, the narrowing conditions of social obscurity or poverty, then these are resented and rebelled against, and the ripening character is disastrously blighted by a premature bitterness. If it be the remonstrances of those older and wiser than ourselves, then these are misinterpreted and disregarded, and the reckless temper of the rebel acquired in advance of provocation or excuse. Let it be observed that there are two fallacies underlying the claim of an unimpeded self-expression. On the one hand it is assumed that the clamant self is competent to understand and formulate the true requirements of nature. On the other hand it is forgotten that the immaturity of youth must needs disqualify it for the independence which youth, just because it is immature and therefore inexperienced, is eager to demand. These are formidable fallacies indeed. For Christianity is not alone in teaching the untrustworthiness of individual versions of human nature. Science has stern teachings as to the influences of heredity and environment which it requires little more than an easy accommodation of language to identify with the older Christian teachings as to the fall of man and the sin of the world. It may well be that the impetuous and imperative demands of your nature are really born of pre-natal perversions of it, or reflect the unfortunate conditions under which it has become articulate, and so are verily false witnesses

as to the true requirements of self-expression in your case. In clothing with final authority the desires which are paramount in youth you may be engaging yourself in a life-long bondage.

7. Natural liberty, again, is thought to be inconsistent with restraint of authority, whereas the truth affirmed by religion and confirmed by experience teaches precisely the contrary. Natural liberty, the power to exercise rightly and fruitfully natural faculties, implies self-subjection to the restraints of law. This perhaps is most clearly seen in the case of the mental powers. Will any one maintain that intellectual self-expression is best secured by no education, or by self-chosen education? Is it not plain that the indispensable conditions of effective intellectual self-expression are those of a sound education in youth? When we come to all that class of human actions which we call moral, with respect to which most especially the conflict between a false independence and the demand of duty is waged, the same law holds. Disregard restraint in the interest of liberty, and you end by destroying liberty itself. Accept restraint as the condition of liberty, and you end by dispensing with restraint altogether.

I will take leave to illustrate my argument by a reference to that deplorable vice of drunkenness which degrades so many of our countrymen, and which weighs so heavily on the fair fame of Scotland. Unthinking youth claims the natural right to satisfy appetite; resents and rejects the warning of religion that in such indulgences life-long chains of sensual habit are manufactured. A few years pass and the man, broken in health and shamed in reputation, acknowledges the

wisdom of temperance, and perforce declares that he has lost the power to be temperate.

Last July I stood for the first time beside the famous Falls of Niagara; it was my last day in the United States, and I desired to invest it with majestic associations. As I gazed on that immense cataract, where a vast river contracts suddenly and hurls a mighty volume of water into a chasm nearly 200 feet below, I shivered at the irresistible power of inanimate nature. Then as my eyes rested on the electric power houses on either bank I reflected on the strange paradox which enabled men to bind to their service these forces of nature, before which they seemed so feeble. The words of the psalmist recurred to my mind, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou regardest him? Thou hast made him but little lower than God: Thou crownest him with glory and honour." I turned to climb again the bank from Goat Island, and there before me, stumbling with uncertain steps and scarcely held from falling by a humiliated woman, was a drunken man. The physical force of nature and the moral weakness of man united in a single picture formed a contrast enigmatic and afflicting. "So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty."

8. Young men, you, as all who before you have run the race of life, must make your choice between the false liberty which refuses restraint and the true liberty which accepts law, between the franchise of self-indulgence and the franchise of self-mastery. The world in which your election must be made will not help you; its syren voices will reach you at every turn, and you

will have within yourself answering voices of desire, protesting, demanding, your self-surrender to sin. But if you will listen, ever with the syren voices comes to you another voice, austere yet tender, as of One who speaks with authority and speaks with love; and the burden of that diviner song is an appeal which wakes every element of manliness and aspiration within you, for it calls to service and to self-respect: listen to that song of the Christian Orpheus, Jesus Christ, and you will have no ears for any other :—

> The feeble echoes of that other lay,
> Which held awhile their senses thralled and bound,
> Were in the distance fading quite away,
> A dull unheeded sound.

"So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty."

XXIV

ANARCHISM [1]

THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.
S. MATTHEW xxii. 39.

We cannot turn away our thoughts to-day from the dark and terrible crime which has just shocked the civilized world, and I shall not affect to ignore it as I preach. It is, indeed, altogether superfluous to add anything here to the expressions of horror for the barbarous cruelty of the assassins, and of deep sympathy for those whom that cruelty has plunged into affliction, which, in and out of Parliament, have been made. There needs no saying that we share to the full the sentiments which have been thus authoritatively uttered, and we add our prayer to Almighty God, the Author of justice and the God of all comfort, that He will strengthen and sustain those who have been called to bear so grievous a burden of sorrow, and will guide the king and nation of Portugal into the paths of righteous and stable liberty. The assassinations in Lisbon belong to a type or category of crime which is distinctive of modern society. Political murders are, indeed, no new factor in European politics, but there are features about

[1] Preached on the 5th Sunday after Epiphany, February 9, 1908, being the day on which public notice was taken of the assassination of the King and Crown Prince of Portugal.

the latest political murders which separate them from former crimes of a similar kind. Personal resentments have often driven men into crime, and the shameless statecraft of rulers has often guided the assassin's hand. Religious fanaticism has transformed the service of the all-loving Jesus into an abominable creed of murder; and a reckless patriotism has not scrupled to emulate the worst violences of tyranny. In all these cases there is an intelligible motive for political crime, and the criminal can offer some excuses, inadequate indeed, and arguing a depraved and perverted conscience, but not irrelevant or without force. The assassinations of our time are of another kind, and commonly have no connection with any individual grievance, or with any religious propaganda, or with patriotism, or with statecraft. They spring from a gloomy moroseness which has no roots in conviction, and no restraints in duty. The resentments which they reveal are neither local, nor political, nor religious. It is order as such that is struck at, not the particular representative of order; society itself is rebelled against, not this or that phase of society. The freest republic may be the scene of political crime as easily as the most arbitrary monarchy. The least responsible individual may be struck down as readily as the most guilty. We have seen within a few years a tsar of Russia perish by assassination, and the presidents of two republics, and the patriotic sovereign of Italy, and the amiable and politically irresponsible empress of Austria. It is clearly impossible to recognize any relation between such tragedies and any clear political or patriotic purpose. Modern assassination has its roots in a vague, impersonal rage against society,

which, as it has no specific justifications, so it keeps no measures, and finds its victims at haphazard, where circumstance suggests and opportunity enables. I would not be understood to deny that political unwisdom and social disintegration have a direct influence on the extent and direction of assassination, and I would be indeed sorry to minimize the solemn warning to all rulers which such crimes undoubtedly convey; still I desire to emphasize the impersonal and unmotived character of modern political murders, and to inquire what may be the causes from which they spring, and by what means those causes may be removed.

Two conditions of modern life are so important, and so conspicuous, that no social student can fail to take them into reckoning. The first is economic, the next is moral. It would be no untrue statement of the facts to say, that the economic development of modern civilization has been uniformly hostile to the free play of human individuality, while some distinctive circumstances of modern life have tended to stimulate individuality in a marked degree. Consider the discrepancy which has grown between men's appetites and ambitions, and their means of satisfying either. Education is more widely distributed than at any previous stage of civilization, but it has become less an instrument of moral discipline than a factor of moral undiscipline. The very circumstance that education is now universal has stripped the process, by which men are educated, of those personal contacts and interests which mostly render it disciplinary in the full sense of the word. For the numbers to be educated are so great, that no concentration of the teacher on individuals

is really any longer possible, and for the same reason the methods of teaching have become dangerously impersonal and non-moral. Knowledge thus acquired is defrauded of its proper effects on character, and rather fills the mind than trains it, and kindles curiosity rather than develops understanding. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth," said the apostle, and the words might describe the characteristic effect of modern education, and at the same time indicate its cause. Knowledge, standing apart from the humanizing influences of personal concern and interest, becomes nothing better than so much information, useful possibly, but neither morally strengthening nor socially valuable. In order that knowledge may become disciplinary, and the instrument of a true education, it must proceed always with that gracious ally which S. Paul calls love. And it is this element precisely which is being rapidly driven out of the systems of public education throughout our western world. This "education" with which men are equipped stimulates their self-importance, exalts their self-estimate, renders them impatient of subordination and restive under hardship, inspires them with immense expectations, and fits them for little endurance. They pass from their schools and colleges to a world which does not make much count of them, which has a very humble theory of individual worth, and provides very rigid grooves for the self-expression of individuals, which exalts material forces and belittles moral worth, which measures men in the scales of fortune, and has no respect for merit that does not succeed. What a tragic discrepancy between theory and fact, between the grandiose doctrines of the schools

and the brutal teachings of experience, between the vainglorious individualism of political speculation and the humbling servitude of economic systems! For, indeed, the individual counts for less and less in the economic process; and so far has the belittlement of individuality advanced, that we seem to tremble on the verge of some great self-enslavement, which shall register and stereotype the final loss of individual liberty.

When external circumstances are least favourable to freedom, there is plainly the most imperative need of that counteracting principle of self-respect which religion breathes into the mind. The worst servitude is stripped of its degrading power so long as the flame of a high religious conviction burns within the human breast; but let that divine flame be extinguished, and there is no longer any restraint on the debasement of servile conditions. Here, then, we have the second grave demoralizing factor of modern life. Religion, which for us means the religion of Christ, has lost its hold over great sections of the European population, and all the pretentious substitutes for Christianity which from time to time have offered themselves, have totally failed to fill its place. The religious bases of morality have been destroyed, and no sufficient alternatives have been discovered, so that the morality of countless multitudes of Europeans and Americans has no roots in conviction, no auxiliaries in religious habit, no sustenance in religious faith. It survives as a mere convention, able to hold its own in favourable circumstances, but powerless to resist the corrosive influences of materialistic criticism and unkindly fortune. Thus,

in the case of whole classes and descriptions of men, we perceive this forlorn and miserable situation. The human spirit, subjected to the sorest strain of circumstance, has no help from within, and its worst elements, disastrously stimulated by the conditions of the world, find no restraints to hold them in check. Hence these cruel, senseless, futile crimes, arresting the world's notice, where the victims are set on the seats of authority, and filling the records of vulgar scandal, where they are wrought against the obscure.

The increase of crime is a fact so well authenticated that there is no need for me to enter on any lengthy proof. The point which I desire to press on you is that this deplorable fact has coincided with the provision of education, and largely with its secularization; that the wisest statesmen and social students of Europe are perplexed by it; that many of them are confessing themselves baffled and disillusioned; that some of them are coming to admit that religion is indispensable for the moral training of human beings, and that there has not yet been discovered any effective alternative for Christianity. I will borrow two quotations from a striking article on "Education and Crime" in the current number of *The Church Quarterly Review*. The first describes the state of affairs in the German empire, and is from the pen of a recognized German authority on the subject:—

"The unpleasant side of this picture," he says, "is the simultaneous and very general lowering of the national standard of morality. To bear out this charge it is but necessary to point to the official statistics. They show a steady and enormous increase of crimes against property and against morality; in the case of the former there has been since 1870 an increase of 500 per cent., and of the latter the fourfold number is now (1903) being committed.

. . . The relations between the sexes have never been in Germany so far as history teaches us, so lax as they are to-day."

The other quotation describes the state of affairs in France, and is taken from the writings of "a French publicist of the first rank, M. ALFRED FOUILLÉE," who expressed himself thus in 1897 :—

"Crime has trebled among us in the last fifty years, although the population has hardly increased. Between 1826 and 1880, while offences by adults trebled in number, those committed by youths of between sixteen and twenty-one years of age quadrupled. In the period 1880 to 1893 crime increased still more rapidly ; in ten years the number of criminal children increased by a fourth, while that of criminal adults increased only by a ninth. . . . To-day, though the number of children between seven and sixteen years of age is less than seven millions, while there are twenty million adults, the children commit more than twice as many offences."

Germany and France are not to be thought of as exceptional ; the same causes are inducing the same results throughout the whole extent of western civilization, and this fearful crime at Lisbon might with equal probability have happened in any civilized state. There is an unanimity of profound apprehension among thoughtful men ; we cannot pretend any longer not to think that the various attempts to civilize and govern on a secularist basis are failing badly : it is hard to avoid the suspicion that, on the lines at present accepted, or on the way to gaining acceptance, we are being hurried to anarchy and disruption.

I chose for my text some words of our Saviour Christ, which happened to come into the appointed lesson for this day. Let me direct your attention to His teaching and to its bearing on our present theme. The evangelist relates that one of the Pharisees asked Christ a question, with a view to testing Him. "Master,

which is the great commandment in the law?" In the questioner's mouth the question had no doubt a very limited reference; he would draw from our Lord an opinion on one of the burning questions of the religious schools. What kind of commandment ought to be given the first place in the regard of the faithful Jew out of the mass of positive rules which ought to be selected for primary observance? In what order of obedience ought the multitudinous precepts of rabbinism to be arranged? Our Saviour makes answer rather disconcertingly by a reference to the words, familiar to every Jew, which were read daily in the temple at morning and evening prayer. "He said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the great and first commandment." He adds a sentence from the Book of Leviticus: "And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Then He universalizes His teaching, and makes His answer to the petty question of the lawyer a profound interpretation of religion on its practical side. "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." The famous Rabbi HILLEL had said something very like this. "What is hateful to thee, do not do to thy neighbour. That is the whole law. All else is commentary upon it," and on his lips the saying was luminous and lofty; but when read in connection with the long and successful political career of the speaker, it suggests rather a large and generous diplomacy than the morality of a deep and affectionate piety. On the lips of Christ this summary of practical religion is not diplomatic but religious, not

a maxim of policy but a law of life. You cannot separate these two commandments, nor may their order be reversed. Love of God is the foundation of that love of man which must inspire social conduct. Religion is the basis of morality. From religion is drawn the principle and the sanction of the moral law; apart from religion the moral law has no true authority; it is nothing more than a convention, powerful, salutary, enforced by the State, approved by public opinion, if you will, but without roots in the conscience itself, not able, if need be, to secure obedience by divine right, nor necessarily a power constantly creating and sustaining the sentiment of self-respect. See how Christ holds together the natural regard for a man's self and his treatment of others. He does not preach contempt of self, but he ordains self-regard to be the ally and guide of social obligation. This is "the royal law according to the scripture," "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Everything turns, then, on the estimate of himself which a man accepts. Self-respect draws in its train respect for others, a low view of self will be revealed in a cynical disregard of others. But what are the postulates of self-respect? How can a high view of self be justified to the reason and to the conscience? When circumstances are so degrading; when the economic ordering of the world is so unfavourable to self-expression; when the scientific verdict on the purpose and method of individual life is so hostile; when the spectacle of human degradation seems to give the lie to any natural goodness in human nature; when the course of the world seems to show that morality is a protean thing, the creature of time and place, what

shall hold any of us back from sinking to the service of our own swinish appetites or giving rein to the fierce passions which inflame our minds? The affirmative answers—I mean the answers which enable the higher instincts of our being to assert themselves triumphantly, which affirm the eternal obligation of purity, righteousness and mercy, which declare that this world is but a passing show and that beyond it is the world of reality, wherein the vindications of morality are found, that whosoever sets his hope on goodness and follows it shall not be put to shame—the affirmative answers, by which the human spirit lives, are given, and can only be given, in the terms of religion. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen."

This dreadful crime in Lisbon cannot be wrongly regarded as one more, and the most impressive imaginable, of the "signs of the times," which (if but we have wisdom rightly to read them) can save us, while there is yet time, from cutting the national life adrift from its ancient moorings in Christian faith. In mere inadvertence, because we have not taken the pains to understand the drift of the policies we sanction, or still more guiltily, in sheer unwillingness to face the difficulties of holding to the principles we profess, or, worst of all, in a temper of cynical pessimism, because, forsooth, we despair of being able to withstand the powerful currents of selfish secularism which are now traversing Christendom and beating strongly against our shores, we may bring upon our nation the worst of all calamities, a bankruptcy of character and a failure of faith. It is easy to do this, most of all easy for those who, as professed politicians, are accustomed, and rightly accustomed,

to regard with jealousy the introduction into the political arena of abstract and absolute propositions, and to insist that the proper temper of sane politics is the elastic and accommodating temper of expediency. Nevertheless, the line of least resistance is not always the most prudent, and it is never the most heroic line to pursue. There are conditions of human action which may not be safely acquiesced in; there are elements of social life which are equally essential and fragile. History has lessons written in blood on her pages which may not with impunity be ignored, and none is more legibly inscribed in her record than the danger and folly of leaving out of count the moral training of men. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction." The words of ancient Hebrew wisdom, which we have listened to from the lectern this morning, seem to take a solemn authentication from the circumstances in which we now stand. We know who they are whose teaching conceals the purpose of murder beneath a pompous parade of altruistic phrases, promising material well-being as the guerdon of moral licence: "Let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil; thou shalt cast thy lot among us: we will all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path; for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood." The language of the wise man accords rarely with our mood to-day; and we cannot but read into it our own fears and sorrows. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," says Christ, giving us thus a short and

sufficient test by which to try the policies of our own time and to prove the worth of our own morality. Yes, and not less the sincerity of our own religion, for, as the apostle says, " He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? "

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